PCZONE

www.pczone.co.uk

#77 JUN 1999

ONLY **£2.99**
Costs less than any other PC games monthly

Half-Life? Try real life.

KINGPIN

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

EXCLUSIVE
PREVIEW
DUNGEON KEEPER 2
Bullfrog redefine the strategy genre

£10
OFF HIGH STREET PRICE
STAR TREK:
BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION
SPECIAL READERS' OFFER

DEFINITIVE REVIEWS

WILD METAL COUNTRY
X-WING ALLIANCE
BALDUR'S GATE: TALES OF THE SWORD COAST
REQUIEM
OFFICIAL FORMULA ONE RACING
VIVA FOOTBALL
COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

IF YOUR COVERMOUNT IS MISSING PLEASE CONSULT YOUR NEWSAGENT
TINY COMPO: Name the development team behind *Kingpin*. First out of the hat wins a mystery prize – full details on page 5

PLUS! SPEC OPS 2: GREEN BERETS • AMEN: THE AWAKENING • STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE •
PLANESCAPE TORMENT • AQUA • BREAKNECK • WHEEL OF TIME • INFANTRY • CUTTHROATS • CONSTRUCTOR 2

£2.99 JUN 1999 PCZ#77

9 771354 070995

06

EXPORT PRICE £3.99 Bf 339

ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE 31st CENTURY
IF YOU DON'T USE YOUR HEAD
YOU'RE DEAD

MECH WARRIOR 3

MechWarrior is back with the most immersive BattleMech® experience yet! MechWarrior 3 gives you over 20 missions, 18 different 'Mechs®, and enough weapons to blow the enemy back to the stone-age. And with fully customisable controls, target acquisition, and new 'Mech combat animation, it's a whole new war.

THE MOST POWERFUL 'MECH EXPERIENCE EVER . UNLEASHED JUNE 1999

MICROPROSE

HASBRO
Interactive

WIN THE
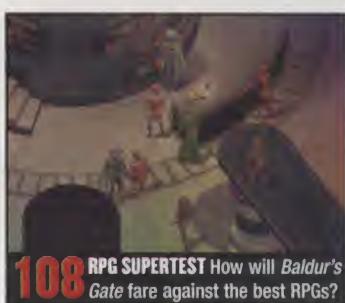**TOP 10**
PC GAMES
SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS
PAGE 26

44 **DUNGEON KEEPER 2** This is shaping up to be much more than a sequel. Yes, we know they all say that, but this time it's true!

50 **THE PHANTOM MENACE** *Star Wars* in adventure game shock.

UK**PC**GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

84 **REQUIEM** Excellent 3D shooter from Ubisoft. Could be a surprise hit.

34 **UK GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS** The countdown begins to the biggest PC gaming event of the year. Have you entered your team yet?

108 **RPG SUPERTEST** How will *Baldur's Gate* fare against the best RPGs?

PCZCONTENTS

" If you've got a strong stomach and aren't offended by foul and abusive language, then *Kingpin* is a beautiful thing "

76 KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME Controversial, ground-breaking and supremely addictive. Read all about it.

⊕ The best internal modem for getting online? All is revealed on page 130.

...plus everything to make the most of your games

MAXIMISE YOUR GRAPHICS

Voodoo3 3000 AGP
16MB Ultra High-Speed, High-Resolution 2D/3D Accelerator

3dfx

NEW
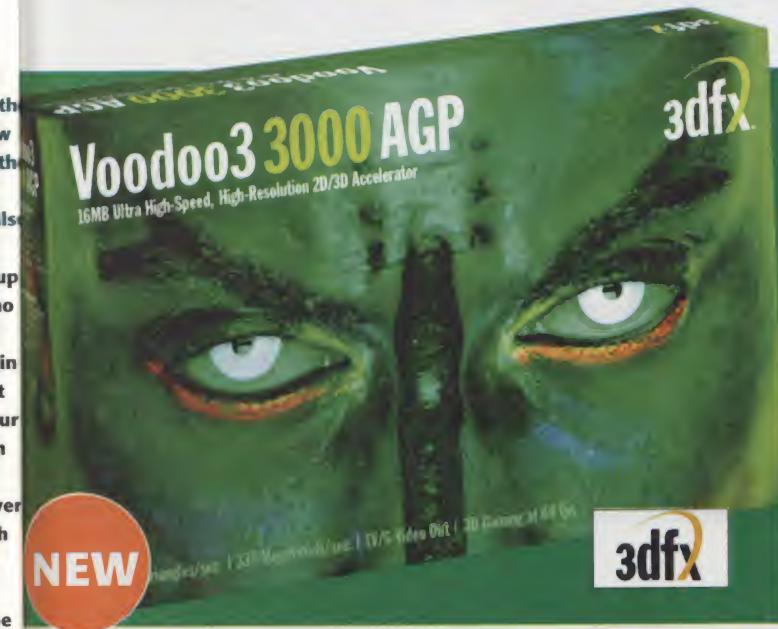
STB Voodoo³ 3000 AGP

Designed to enhance the latest generation of computer hardware, Voodoo³ 3000 is an Ultra High speed high resolution 2D/3D graphics accelerator which provides awesome visual effects at resolutions as high as 2046 x 1536 and also supports DVD hardware acceleration. The standard TV/S-Video output jack on the Voodoo 3-3000 allows you to output to a compatible TV or Monitor.

£149 INC. VAT

Creative Labs 3D Blaster Voodoo² 12Mb
Including the legendary Voodoo² Chipset and 12Mb RAM for outstanding 3D graphics, awesome acceleration and unique special effects.
Was £99.
SAVE £20
£79 INC. VAT

ATi Rage Fury
NEW
With a 128-bit graphics processor and 32Mb of memory the Rage Fury will power all your favourite graphics-intensive games. Full hardware support for DVD playback, no need for a separate MPEG-2 decoder.
£149 INC. VAT

CONTROL THE GAME

Put yourself in the cockpit with the latest steering wheel and joystick technology, adding more feedback and realism than ever before.

Logitech WingMan Formula Force Steering Wheel & Pedals
Built with the revolutionary I-Force feedback technology for a realistic driving experience. Complete with pedals that have realistic spring forces.
Was £149.
SAVE £20
£129 INC. VAT

Microsoft® SideWinder® Force Feedback Pro
Feel true-to-life feedback from subtle sensations to raw power forces. Experience multiple forces simultaneously and even feel which direction the forces come from.
£99.99 INC. VAT

Microsoft® SideWinder® Freestyle Pro Gamepad
Tilt from side to side and up and down to control movement within the game.
£49.99 INC. VAT

Thrustmaster Formula Sprint Steering Wheel and Pedals
Outmanoeuvre your opponents and sprint to the finish with this great value wheel and pedals combination.
£49.99 INC. VAT

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE GAME

Surround yourself with sound and you'll really feel the drama. These new kits really exploit the CD quality sound tracks of the latest games.

Microsoft® Digital Sound System 80
SAVE £50
80 watt, 3 piece sound system with analogue and digital capabilities. Those who have wanted their PC sound system to provide the kind of performance that their home entertainment system provides need wait no longer.
Was £179.
£129 INC. VAT

Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! Value Soundcard
SAVE £10
With performance surpassing professional quality equipment and value geared for gaming.
Was £79.99.
£69.99 INC. VAT

Labtec LCS-1030 Speakers
Immerse yourself in today's games modern soundtracks with these 10 watt remote speakers.
£39.99 INC. VAT

TECHNICAL CENTRE

Every PC World store has a Technical Centre where you can get experts to install your new add-ons or software for you.♦

PC WORLD
THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

THIS TIME IT'S FOR REAL

We have reached a crossroads in videogaming history. For the first time ever we have on our hands a 3D shoot 'em up so frighteningly realistic that the censors are bound to be up in arms the moment they set eyes on it. The game in question is of course *Kingpin*. Real-world environments, perpetual swearing and human opponents to contend with all point towards an experience that mirrors real life in almost every way.

And therein lies the bone of contention. We're on the verge of discovering exactly how close to the real world video games can get before the censors pull the plug.

In this respect, *Kingpin* will set a precedent one way or the other. If the censors decide that we're not entitled to play adult-oriented games in the comfort of our own homes, and ban *Kingpin* from public sale, warning bells will ring in the ears of development teams worldwide. The next generation of 3D shooters may well arrive heavily populated with alien beings and faceless monsters (more or less what we've been used to up till now, in fact), and the attempts by developers Xatrix to take what is quickly becoming a stagnant genre several steps forward will have been in vain. We can but hope.

Regardless, *Kingpin* has taken the *PC ZONE* office by storm in more ways than one. The editorial team have taken it to their hearts, and regular multiplayer sessions of the game are interrupting work on a daily basis. However, our ads account manager Emma Lewis has not warmed to the game in quite the same way. She announced to a startled *ZONE* assembly that *Kingpin* is shocking, over the top, morally offensive, and should be banned. But she did add that it might have been more entertaining if some stray cats were to lick up all the pools of blood lying around the levels. Which destroyed her argument somewhat.

While we're on the subject of realism in games, you may be interested to know that Stephen Hill and Charlton Brooker are currently combining their intellectual skills (that won't take long) to bring you a feature on this very subject next issue (on sale Thursday 3 June).

Finally, a word to the BBFC and anyone else who might be waiting in the wings to take one of the most innovative games of recent times and pull it to shreds: listen to the words of Paul McCartney and The Beatles – let it be.

Enjoy the issue. See you again next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

All *PC ZONE*'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a reviewer who's a fan of the genre

Chris Anderson
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
If *Kingpin* gets banned it will be a triumph for pompous ignorance over common sense. If this happens, feel free to write to your local MP and complain. On a daily basis.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
Er, I thought everyone liked *Star Wars*, don't they?

Paul Mallinson
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
It's bound to give the moral majority something to crow about, but they should all just f**k off and grow up.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
I'm one of those people who can either take it or leave it. I prefer my sci-fi grittier and more realistic – give me the original *Alien* any day.

Richie Shoemaker
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
It'll get banned. Xatrix will go bust and take to the streets with lead piping. Victims' parents will sue...
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
I'm going to New York to see the film, , I've got a life-size cut-out of Darth, CP-30, R2 and Chewy. Wonderful? What do *you* think?

Mark Hill
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
Everyone who *wants* to be offended *will* be. But violence is an inextricable part of modern entertainment.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
No point in denying it. It's 20th century mythology, and our world wouldn't be the same without it.

Steve Hill
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
Anyone who is offended by it is a dumbasss motherf**ker.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
It'll never catch on.

Charlie Brooker
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
Anyone who objects to the game should have their brains smashed out with a crowbar.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
It's all a load of simple-minded pantomime for overgrown children.

Paul Presley
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
It ain't a controversy until the *Daily Mail* says so.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
I admit I'm nervous that *Episode 1* won't live up to the hype, but I'm sure it'll make a packet anyway.

Keith Pullin
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
It's an avenue of realism which is yet to be explored on the PC. Tarantino for gamers.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
In a perfect world it would have flopped when it first came out.

Adam Phillips
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
It'll probably have the chattering classes spinning on their coffee tables, but who cares? Did they manage to ban *GTA*? Nope.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
Am I the only person who doesn't think the movie trailer is gobsmackingly fantastic? Thought so. I'll get my coat. Again.

David McCandless
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
Who gives a motherf**kin' shit, you motherf**kin' piece of shit?
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
How did a guy with such a terrible beard make the most important film of all time?

Warren Chrismas
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
I think it's f**king brilliant, and any f**ker who disagrees can f**k right off.
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
What about it? It's just a hunch, but I reckon *Episode One* will be better than *Wing Commander: The Movie*.

Phil Wand
The *Kingpin* controversy – discuss.
Violent games don't turn sane people into psychopaths, but whoever heard of a sane nine-year-old?
***Star Wars*, wonderful *Star Wars*?**
The most unforgettable fairy tale ever. I can't help thinking of tauntaun intestines every time I eat fettuccini.

MAILBOX

A *PC ZONE* reader suggests a 'splendid' idea, BT comes under online fire, and *ZONE* staff are encouraged to 'nut each other' in the head. It takes all sorts...

⭐ ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

HOTLINE
DECEMBER WED 2ND

THU 4TH
THU 24TH
FRI 25TH
TUE 8TH
SAT 26TH
THU 31ST
JANUARY
FRI 1ST
FRI 11TH
SAT 2ND
FRI 8TH
FRI 22ND
FRI 15TH
FRI 29TH
TUE 19TH

↩ Publishers' details for Hotline were usually out of date before you could say 'boo' to a goose

CONTACT INFO

If your letter is selected as Letter of the Month we'll send you some promotional goodies, a game and maybe even some hardware!

WRITE TO Mailbox, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at **www.pczone.co.uk** for further info.

BRING BACK HOTLINE

I like your magazine, but there are a number of things I feel would make it even better. I would be happier if you brought back Hotline so that we could know when to expect the latest releases. I am sure many of your readers who buy the magazine to keep up with the latest developments in the computer gaming industry would welcome the reintroduction of such an item with open arms.

Also, the language used in this magazine is getting worse. Magazines are not made more pleasant by the addition of swear or smutty words, even if they are censored with asterisks. Swearing does not make you 'hard' – it is used by people with no muscles who find it necessary to put down others who would otherwise be

tougher than them, and is not found clever or amusing by anyone above the age of about seven.

If you do not print this letter I shall only be able to assume that you have neither an interest in the comments of your readership nor a desire to fulfil their needs.

PS: *Thief: The Dark Project* is far better than *Half-Life*, in which you just go
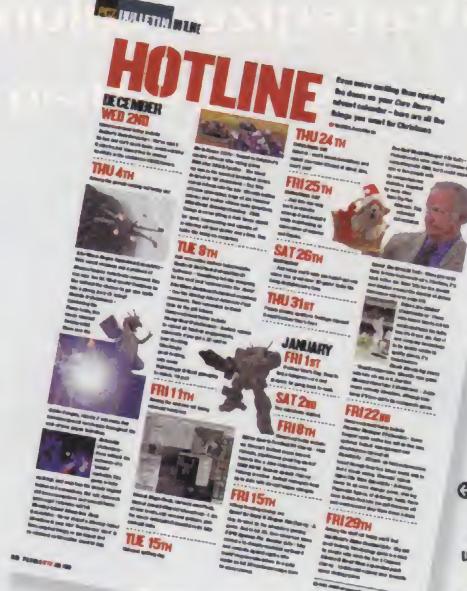
> **❝Why do Sony consider that the UK market is not worth bothering with❞**
>
> **DARKMERE**

around blasting the **** (see, it's not clever) out of enemies, which has already been tried in every game since *Space Invaders*. Plus, without a 3D card, the graphics look worse than *Doom*, and that was made years ago.

Peter Lacey

⭐ We've had a lot of letters about Hotline. We dropped it because the release dates that were given to us by publishers for their games invariably had little in common with anything that was ever

going to happen in real life. This is because they have no control over slippage and can only give us the release dates they believe are correct at the time we go to press. But that still doesn't change the fact that by the time we go on sale, almost all the dates are

wrong because release dates have been put back, which is no help to anyone. So we decided to drop it. By the way, we do *not* swear a lot – in fact, the mag has toned down in this respect, and *The Dark Project* is a fine game, but it is not better than *Half-Life*.

MONEY MOAN

I am a recent convert to *PC ZONE*: I read issue 75 and it rocked – congratulations. However, this letter is not just to tell you how much better you are than other games mags, it's also to talk about online gaming. I am an avid online gamer, an ➡

LETTER OF THE MONTH

TUTORING ON DOWN

Firstly, I'm not going to lie and say that I get *PC ZONE* regularly, because I don't. I get it often enough because it is a good magazine and worthy of the title 'best-selling'. I've never written to a magazine before, and the reason I've decided to do so now is because I read the article on how *PC ZONE* has become the nation's Number One, and you wanted to know our thoughts on how to improve the magazine.

In recent issues there have been tutorials on how to build levels for games such as *Half-Life* and *Quake II*. Since I finish these games very quickly, I usually end up making my own levels anyway, and I have found these tutorials very helpful. What I suggest is that for these tutorials there should be some sort of recognition of the levels people

build. If possible, devote a page or a section of your CD to the levels readers have made from the guidance of your tutorials, and see the benefits from those tutorials.

Also, another feature I think would be interesting is a section on strange secrets in games. For example, the 'Well of Wishes' in *Quake I* showing the dopefish from Commander Keen. I know there are not many other examples of this, but I think it would be fun to talk about these areas, especially for those who have finished a game and who can then go back and find these secrets.

Finally, I'd like to apologise for such a long letter. I would imagine that from playing games for a living, a person would have a relatively short attention span.

Gordon Murray, 18

⭐ The gaming secrets idea is something we're already considering for a short feature, but the idea of challenging readers

GOODIES WINNER!

How to design a *Half-Life* level. Show us how you got on.
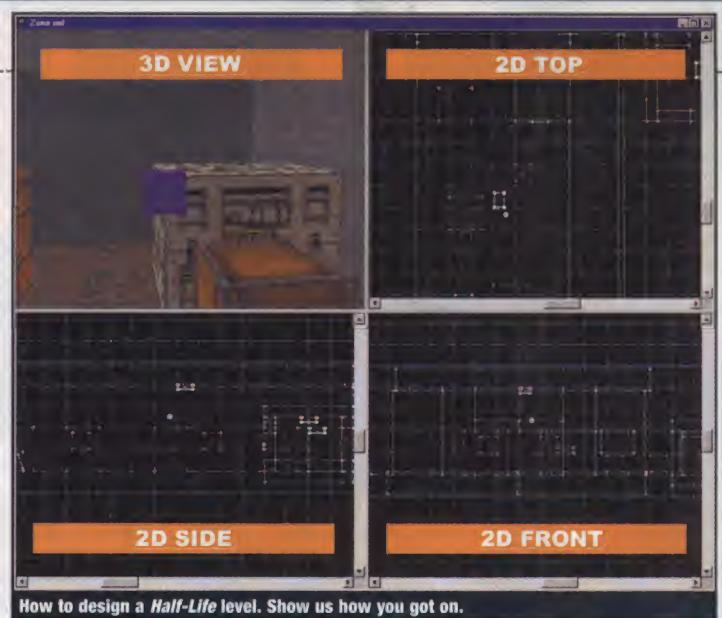
to show us what they've produced using our How To guides is a splendid one, and one we will actively follow up. Which means that you, Gordon Murray, have

won yourself a delightful bag of gaming goodies for your efforts. And don't worry about the length of your letter, it was just about right. No really.

addict in fact, and in this country that is *bad*. My last phone bill listed over £150 of Internet connections made. And the reason? Online gaming – I play *Meridian 59*. Behind its (admittedly dire) graphical exterior lies the greatest online RPG available *(in your opinion – Ed)*.

I recently ordered, for £70, a copy of *Everquest* from EBWorld (only $49.99 for the game, the rest was shipping charges). Sony only released 1,000 copies to the UK! Why do they consider that the UK market is not worth bothering with – *Everquest* is an *amazing* game? But 75p a minute is too much for an Internet connection, and we can't afford to go online.

I would gladly pay an ISP a flat rate of £30 a month (twice what most ISPs charge) if they provided an 0800 number. It can be done – witness X-Stream's free March weekend call offer. The phone line was so busy it could take an hour to

connect, and you got disconnected after an hour.

This was with five times the number of servers, which normally cater to 265,000 people – you do the maths to see how many people were willing for the inconvenience just to take advantage of that offer. I think you (being, if not the voice of the people, a more noticeable voice than some guy on a phone whining to BT about charges) should try to organise a petition with some of the Internet mags to try to get free local phone calls, just like they have in a lot of other

countries (USA. and Canada are just two). BT have a virtual monopoly, it's not as if they can't afford it.

Imagine: *UO*, *StarSiege Tribes*, and now *EQ*, without having to worry about phone charges? [goes off in a blissful state of dreaming...]
Darkmere

⊕ You're unlikely to get free phone calls in this country for some time, if at all. However, we have been told that some companies (BT included) are working on providing services that give you free phone calls for a monthly fee of £30

(presumably on top of your normal rental charges). We can't confirm this as fact just yet, but we'll know more next month, and you can be sure we'll pass the information on to you as soon as we get it. As for *Everquest*, see below.

EVERQUEST FOR THE UK?

I was wondering if you could help. I have been following the progress of *Everquest*, and considering it as an alternative to *UO*. The game went online on the March 16 in the US, but I can't find any information as to the release date in the UK. Is a UK release out of the question? It seems the Yanks think that the UK's primary source of entertainment consists of gathering around an open fire drawing pretty pictures of wild animals on cave walls (which happens to be my opinion of them). Would you please try to find out any info, as it would be greatly appreciated. And what is your opinion of *Everquest*?

Also, can I warn ICQ users not to accept a file transfer of ICQ99 from any other ICQ user as it may contain the CIH virus, which I found out to my expense – reformatting is a pain in the arse, and that's the cheap option. Thanks for your time.
Colin Rodgers, Blackpool

⊕ We plan to run a feature and review on *Everquest* – if we can find anyone from Sony who admits to having heard of the game. We are currently trying to contact the developers of the game in the US for more info. Watch this space, etc.

POINTLESS?

In the spirit of sheer pointlessness, I have a suggestion for how to improve your reviews (not a big improvement, I admit, but one of those tweaks that makes the difference between a plain concrete wall and baroque architecture).

There appears to be frequent disagreements in your office over whether a game is good or not, and it'd be useful to tell whether a particular game was universally popular/ unpopular, or whether we were getting one person's view. Why not have an additional rating for each game to show how much agreement there was,

> **❝Why not have an additional rating for each game to show how much agreement in the office there was over a game❞**
>
> SAMAEL

ranging from 'Heaven' (complete consensus where everyone wanders around smiling and strumming on harps) to 'Armageddon' (where views are so different that people strap nuclear warheads to their heads and nut each other).
Samael

⊕ Review scores of big games generally reflect how the magazine as a team feels about the game in question. If a game is universally unpopular/ popular, we tend to mention this in the text. 🎮

Everquest: err… when we finally find someone at Sony who's heard of it, we'll bring you more details.

SHORTS

Keep your letter short and you're more likely to get a reply in PC ZONE

BOTTY TROUBLES

This is the first email I've sent, so I'll apologise up front for any cock-ups. First of all, I'd like to thank you for providing the best PC games mag out there. And I have but one query, really, and that is: are there any 'bots' available for *Half-Life*, and if so where can I find them? If not, do you know if any are planned?
Gerard McGlynn

⊕ There are no bots available for *Half-Life* at present, and we don't expect that to change until Valve release the source code for the game, which they will inevitably do at some point in the future. As always, we will keep you posted on any developments.

NICE

I played a demo of a game called *Nice 2* a few months ago that was good looking and blindingly fast, even on a P166. It was a hoot – you could race McLarens or 2CVs. It never hit the

shelves locally. Did the game ever get published? If not yet, have you any idea of a release date?
Mike Clitherow

⊕ *Nice 2* is now known as *Breakneck* (see our preview on page 52), and has been considerably enhanced since the original demo was released. It looks fantastic, and we'll have an exclusive demo of the new version on the cover CD of our next issue, on sale Thursday 3 June.

WE ARE SUPREME

Being a dedicated reader, I've noticed that in 99.9 per cent of screenshots the health bar is always full, especially in action games like *Quake II* and stuff. Why is this? Are you all a bunch of wimps who can't play properly, or is there another reason? Anyway, keep up the good work.
James Baron

⊕ The reason the health bar is always full in our screenshots is because we

are gaming gods who can do no wrong. I can't believe I had to explain that.

ZONE SLACKING SCANDAL

Hey, you people have a month to produce this mag. Don't get me wrong, I think it is the best around. But a month?! Surely a fortnight would do? The office must be empty until about three days before deadline, when all the team rushes in and desperately get the reviews out. What's going on?
Richard Martin

⊕ You're wrong, Richard. We actually leave it to the last day before press to start producing the mag. At that point we discuss what should go in the Reviews section, quickly write all the reviews (we spend about one minute on each game), and the rest of the mag obviously writes and designs itself, so we don't have anything else to do. We're surprised it's taken this long for anyone to suss us out.

The ZONE team 'discuss' our latest cover game.

Green Berets will incorporate facial expressions to create far more realistic-looking characters.

Multiplayer games will be incorporated, at last.

TARGETING: ZOMBIE_AUSTIN

TIME TO TAKE YOUR HATS OFF TO

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Zombie
PUBLISHER Take 2
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Winter 99

IN SUMMARY

Based on the US Army's elite Green Berets, the game also features the SAS and the German GSG9 special forces units.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

It's the sequel to the highly rated war 'em up, *Spec Ops: Rangers Assault*. Innit?

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

People will be so sick of real war that they won't be interested. Or global conflict will decimate the human race, reducing the number of potential consumers.

SPEC OPS 2: GREEN BERETS

The horror of war as entertainment. Again

⭐ **WAR-TORN** Steve Hill

Spec Ops 2 will feature more elaborate indoor environments than its predecessor. Here's one of them.

German outfit GSG9 – obviously too ugly to be seen in public.

Stalking in a winter wonderland.

The frozen tundra of the Antarctic, where you'll need more than a green beret to keep your swede warm.

Khakis rock, apparently.

Again, both first- and third-person views are available. Which is nice.

Training is provided in this so-called shoot house.

In his glowing review of the original, Richie reckoned that "*Spec Ops: Rangers Assault* (PCZ #65, 88%) is unlike anything you will have ever played". A bold claim indeed. And one that's unlikely to be levelled at its sequel, *Spec Ops 2: Green Berets* when it emerges at the end of this year.

Barring a freak change of direction, the chances are that *Green Berets* will bear at least some resemblance to its predecessor. A minor hit the best part of a year ago, *Rangers Assault* was a devious, stealth-oriented war game, and not, as the name might suggest, a sickening simulation of Glaswegian football violence.

⊙ Pad Thai noodles, please.

Green Berets promises more of the same – war, that is – predictably featuring the titular elite of the US army. Forgoing historical revisionism, the game, perhaps wisely, overlooks the team's heroic exploits in the paddy fields of Vietnam, and instead concentrates on modern-day scenarios, taking in such diverse locations as India, Thailand, Antarctica, Germany, and the JFK Warfare Centre, wherever that is.

The original was pretty damn stealthy itself, but *Spec Ops 2* promises an all-new stealth

mode whereby you can sneak up on an enemy character, taking into account the direction he's facing relative to your character's, as well as to any nearby light sources. The

66 You will even be able to drag your wounded buddies out of harm's way and, with the correct medical equipment, attempt to revive them 99

chances of detection can be reduced further by shooting out lamps and other artificial light sources.

As for new gadgetry, we're promised bayonets, wire cutters, flares, Thermite grenades, proximity mines, compasses, .50-caliber sniper rifles, barrel-launched grenades, booby traps, laser-pointing devices, and the powerful Carl Gustav recoilless rocket launcher.

New character capabilities are also being developed, from hand and arm signals, to silent kills with a knife, and

some levels will involve controlling up to four characters. Characters will now be able to scale obstacles, jump up and down, climb ropes, throw grenades from prone positions, wade through water, parachute, and operate machine guns. Perhaps somewhat macabrely, you will even be able to drag your wounded buddies out of harm's way and, with the correct medical equipment, attempt to revive them. And if that's not enough, then you should seriously consider joining the army. PCZ

Nobody mention calamari or we're done for.

COME ON, LET'S GO PARTY...

AQUA

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Massive
PUBLISHER None yet!
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Christmas

IN SUMMARY

Take *Elite*, tie a brick round its neck, and drown it. And paint it with pretty colours. And give it a stupid name. And you've got this.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

It's the sequel to *Archimedean Dynasty*, which was a fantastic game that unfortunately passed people by on account of its rubbish, *rubbish* name.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

The gaming public tends to prefer its games set above sea level. And there's plenty of competition from all those *Star Wars* tie-ins too.

A computer game detailing the exploits of everyone's all-time number one band?

✪ SHUDDERING WITH ANTICIPATION Charlie Brooker

We saw a nude photo of her out of Aqua on the Internet, once. You could see the lot. The lot!
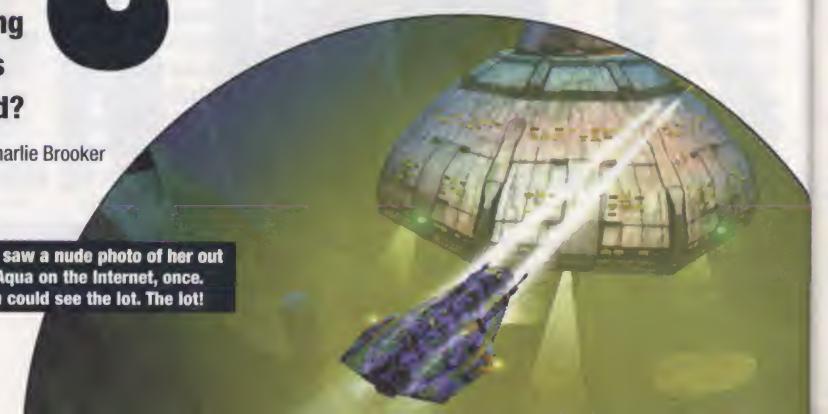
Some of the wibbly-wobbly organic enemies are quite big.

It gets quite moody under the sea, you know.

Weren't you in an episode of *Captain Nemo* once?

As you can see from this cockpit view, it's just like *TIE Fighter* and the like. But wetter.

Tch. If it gets stuffy you can't roll down the window or anything. You're underwater.

Yes, for a fleeting moment we were thinking the same thing: a game based on everyone's favourite mindless Euro-pop outfit? Excellent! You'd have a choice between playing as the little duck-faced girl with the scarlet hair, or the shouty, bull-necked cellmate from Hell, and it would be a sort of cross between *Tomb Raider* and that dancing game on the PlayStation, with loads of gratuitous hard-core pornography cropping up between levels. Well, they're Dutch or something, aren't they? Huh? Anyway, it'd be fantastic. Except for the soundtrack, which would eventually drive you to suicide.

But that isn't what it is at all. In fact, *Aqua* is the sequel to the overlooked classic *Archimedean Dynasty*, a game which earned a whopping 92 per cent from ourselves waaaaay back in issue 46. Why the original never *really* set the registers

ringing is a moot point. Perhaps it was the unusual undersea setting. Perhaps it was the competition from more traditional 3D blasters like *TIE Fighter* and *The Darkening*. Or perhaps it was because saddling a game with a clunky title like *Archimedean Dynasty* is almost as off-putting as calling it *Alan Titchmarsh's Unicycling Crochet Adventure* and hiring someone to stand in front of

the shelf, ringing a bell and telling potential customers to scarper. What were they thinking? Most people fell asleep halfway through reading the *name*, for God's sake. They might as well have called it *Don't Bother*.

Anyway, the sensibly monikered *Aqua* can be summed up fairly

accurately as an underwater take on *Elite*. You take on the role of an aquatic mercenary called Emerald 'Dead Eye' Flint (presumably he's got a glass eye or something) and must rid the undersea world of an as yet unnamed (but "sinister and horrible") menace by darting around in a variety of futuristic submariney-type things, firing watery laser bolts at wibbly-wobbly bad creature-type things.

66 *Aqua* is powered by a highfalutin engine with a stupid name – Krass – which supports all the 3D cards and is simply *dripping* with all the volumetric bump-mappy bi-linear whoojamflippery you could ask for **99**

We're promised plenty of scary organic enemies which will test the developer's curved surface technology to the very limit. As you can see from the screenshots, this is a good-looking slice of game pie.

But hang on a moment... Developers Massive claim *Aqua* will

boast both an epic interactive plotline *and* a load of do-what-you-like *Elite*-style open-endedness. Which should be impossible. Still, they reckon they'll be implementing a clever sort of 'plot guidance system' which enables you to do largely as you choose, occasionally 'catching' you to advance the unfolding storyline with a series of interrelated missions. A kind of free will on stabilisers.

Like all potential blockbusters, *Aqua* is powered by a highfalutin engine with a stupid name – Krass – which supports all the 3D cards and is simply *dripping* with all the volumetric bump-mappy bi-linear whoojamflippery you could ask for. What else? Well, not much. There's no publisher as yet (that's still being finalised), and it isn't out for a *long* time. We just thought you'd appreciate a gander. Because we care. About you. In a gentle and concerned, yet faintly sinister way.

Now close your eyes and please *stop crying*. PCZ

Dynamic radiosity lighting, curved surfaces, portals, mirrors, skeletal animation, a full weather system... *Amen: The Awakening* will require a top-end PC and a 3D card to run properly.

A living, breathing city – with mutants and everything. *Amen: The Awakening* will feature huge outdoor environments as well as bustling cities. Apparently, some of the levels will be ten times the size of most 3D shooter levels. Wow!

MAY THE LORD MAKE US TRULY THANKFUL,

AMEN: THE AWAKENING

Cavedog's forthcoming action RPG looks like it could be rather special – *and* it's due out before *Deus Ex*

⊙ REPORT Paul Mallinson

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Cavedog Entertainment
PUBLISHER GT Interactive
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE September

IN SUMMARY

The latest in a long line of 'next-generation' RPGs (see: *System Shock 2, Deus Ex, Anachronox*), *Amen: The Awakening* looks like *Half-Life* meets *The Omega Man*. It could even turn out to be *Fallout 3D*.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

We absolutely *love* realistic action RPGs here at *PC ZONE*, and this game looks like being up there with the best of them. Cavedog are also on the right track graphically.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

No one's seen the game up and running as yet, and there's still a slim chance it could all go pete tong. Knowing Cavedog, though, it won't.

Venture into the night, but don't step in any dog muck.

The "50-hour James Cameron movie" of the gaming world?

Another bloody sewer.

The game will be full of dark situational humour. Could this be the first ever 3D sitcom?

Another bloody warehouse.

Cavedog Entertainment are known for their real-time strategy games – *Total Annihilation*, for example – so it comes as something of a surprise to hear that the US-based development arm of GT Interactive now have a new first-person shoot 'em up in the pipeline, and plan to release it before the end of the summer.

Amen: The Awakening seems to have a rather interesting plot. The whole thing apparently takes place on Earth in the year 2066, although the story itself begins on Christmas Eve 2032. Here we discover the inexplicable story of a world gone mad. So mad, in fact, that everyone starts killing each other with knives and guns. Millions die, and military 'safe zones' are created for survivors.

This is where you come in. Playing as British commando Bishop Six, your ultimate aim in *Amen: The Awakening* is to track down the source of all this

madness and murder: was it the result of a biological experiment gone wrong, or was it merely God getting his own back? Not an easy question to answer, but one you must address if you're to get anywhere in the game.

Amen uses Cavedog's own 3D engine called the Amengine (guffaw) and will feature massive outdoor environments, as well as intricate exteriors, played out over 12 'acts' (That's 'levels' to you and me – Ed).

These acts will be set in environments as diverse as a prison complex and a moving aircraft carrier. As you can see from these screenshots, Cavedog's in-house 3D modellers have done themselves proud, with each location reproduced in mega-anal detail and enhanced with all kinds of smoke/particle/reflective effects.

Although the graphics have a slightly futuristic look to them, Cavedog are attempting to make the game look and feel as realistic as possible. As lead designer Greg

MacMartin explains: "We have gone to great lengths to create environments that players can identify with. Certain locations, like the Pittsburgh Airport, will look very much like they do today." Which is excellent news for realism fans.

At the end of the day though, *Amen: The Awakening* promises to be more than just a shoot 'em up. The designers are not afflicted with a gun

66We have gone to great lengths to create environments that players can identify with. Certain locations will look much like they do today99

fetish – "this game is more than just a shooter," says Greg – and stealth, plot and interaction with the environment will be brought to the fore. There will be a number of deadly weapons to choose from, although the M800 assault rifle is the only one being revealed at present.

You will be able to complete *Amen* in a number of ways, and there'll also be plenty of scary surprises hidden in dark corners to keep you on your toes.

From what we've seen of *Amen: The Awakening* thus far, Warren Spector and the *Deus Ex* team have

something to worry about. Us? We've got another great-looking action RPG to look forward to. So, as we are wont to say: bring it on! PCZ

An early conceptual of Bishop Six, the guy you play.

LA STORIES

○ **NEWS EDITOR** Richie Shoemaker

Right now we're all gearing up to go E³. Held in sunny Los Angeles in the middle of May, it is the world's largest platform for games publishers and developers to show off their latest titles. Having never been, I'm looking forward to it immensely. Conversely, Mallo, who's a veteran of such things, would rather stay at home. From hearing stories of constant meetings and barging through hordes of games journalists blindly walking in every direction, I can see his point. ECTS, the European trade show, is bad enough – imagine being on Oxford Street on a typical Christmas Eve for three consecutive days at 10 hours a stretch. Combine this with jet-lag and you can imagine what a pitiful mass of zombies we'll all constitute.

The good side is that we actually get to see some of the year's biggest games, as well as a huge number that have yet to be announced. *Quake III Arena*, *Tiberian Sun*, *Driver*, *Black And White* and *Ultima: Ascension* will all be on show in playable form; Eidos have made it clear that they've got 'something big' to announce; and at long last we'll finally get to see *GTA 2*. Unfortunately, most of us will miss perhaps the biggest event of the year: the theatrical release of *The Phantom Menace*. But I can live with that (I'm spending a small fortune to go to New York to see it a week later).

When we get back, tired and jaded, the work will begin to assimilate all the news we've collected. It's a huge task, and it's certainly something I'm not relishing. Luckily, all *you* have to do is wait – next issue you're going to be treated to quite a feast.

For now, there are plenty of new games to keep you going. My job for this issue is done. It's 10pm on deadline day, and what better way to wind down than with a quick blast of *Kingpin*. Bliss.

CARMAGEDDON DOWN UNDER

Stainless Software, creators of the first two *Carmageddon* titles, have relinquished the reins for the sequel, *Carmageddon: The Death Race 2000*, which is being developed by previously unknown Melbourne developers Torus Games, whose only other PC game in development is *Squatter* – a sheep farming simulator.

Ironically it was the 1975 Sly Stallone film *Death Race 2000* that inspired Stainless to create the first game, and although the licence is by no means secured, it seems Torus' effort may well end up closest in spirit to 'Mad Max on wheels'.

With sheep no doubt featuring heavily, *Death Race* will feature 45 tracks through 15 environments. New vehicles and pedestrians are promised, with enhanced AI that ensures peds will fight back. Online games will also be included. and you'll be able to customise both cars and pedestrians before each race. With a new 3D engine that enables twice as many objects on screen at any one time, and new effects such as reflective surfaces and shadows, you can be sure we'll bring you more on *Carmageddon III* next issue, on sale Thursday 3 June. Once again SCI will be publishing the game, which is slated for a November release.

Squatter **is unlikely to appear in the UK.**

Carmageddon: The Death Race 2000.

PC GETS SQUARE

Squaresoft, self-proclaimed kings of computer RPGs, are planning to port their PlayStation hit *Parasite Eve* to the PC. Although still awaiting a PlayStation release over here, the *Resident Evil*-style RPG adventure has been available in the US for months, and is regarded as a game easily on a par with *Final Fantasy VII*, only more adult. Although no release date has been announced, we can assume it will follow *Final Fantasy VIII* later this year. With *Metal Gear Solid* also making the transition to PC, it looks like console developers are finally seeing the PC as a viable gaming platform.

Resident Evil **meets** *Final Fantasy*.

Actress: Listen...
Your cells are trying
to communicate...

Lara? Is that you?

There are over 20 opponents to race against.

"The game puts you in the shoes of the young Anakin Skywalker as he scouts around eight worlds in a choice of 20 Podracers"

ANAKIN SKYWALKER

If only he knew.

Race around Tatooine.

Multiplayer games will be included.

DARTH RACER

LucasArts signal a change in direction for new *Star Wars* games

You'd have thought that LucasArts' first game to be based on the new *Star Wars* movie, *The Phantom Menace,* might have been a space combat sim, or perhaps a *Quake*-style shoot 'em up. But no. Shock horror, the first in what will undoubtedly be a long line of new games are to be a third-person action adventure and a simple racer. The former you can read about on page 50; *Star Wars: Episode I – Racer* you can find out about right here.

The title *Racer* gives the game away somewhat. Based on the Pod racing scene that crops up early on in the film, the game puts you in the shoes of the young Anakin Skywalker as he scoots around eight worlds in a choice of 20 Podracers.

Considering both games are to be released simultaneously on PC and PlayStation at the end of May, the decision to create a racer isn't all that surprising – racing is about all the ageing PlayStation can handle, after all. What is surprising is that the games will be released over here well before the actual film. That situation could change, but there's a danger than some may put off buying, waiting for the film's release before committing to the game. Then again...

With 20 Podracers to choose from, *Racer* aims to simulate speeds of up to 600mph.

SIM CITIZEN

Life in the suburbs of *SimCity*

L ife is indeed cruel. Born into an uncaring world, you grow up with dreams of success and end up subsisting on a diet of bad TV and low wages. Ah, but it's not all bad – with *The Sims*, you're virtually born again.

Starting off life as a young bachelor – or bachelorette – your aim in *The Sims* is simply to live. Not to survive, as is the case in reality, but to live life to the full. But to do this you need to find accommodation, meet the neighbours, get a job, find the love of your life – and even go to the toilet.

Billed as a 'tactical domestic simulator', *The Sims* will imitate every aspect of daily life, and as was the case with the *SimCity* games, life – far from being mundane – can throw up all manner of problems...

That girl you fancy might just kick you where it hurts if you rub her up the wrong way; then there's also a chance that your boss could invite himself round for dinner – scuppering your plans to make a move on the girl next door, but furthering your chances of promotion. We're told that should you fancy starting fights and such like, you'll be able to play as a bad citizen, although whether you'll be able to get involved in full-on criminal activities remains to be seen. As the game is based in a US-style city, no doubt you'll have to contend with trash, sidewalks and drinking lite beer, rather than rubbish, paths and Boddingtons. Still, beats emigrating.

The Sims, via Electronic Arts, will be released in the summer.

Build the home of your dreams.

Maybe outdoor loos will make a comeback...

Never leave your oven unattended.

The Sims get saucy.

Urgh, naked people.

Follow ten possible careers.

"Is that your boss? Let the twat win."

VOXEL OVERKILL

Those of you who actually enjoyed *Delta Force* (*PCZ* #74, 66%) will probably find news of *Maximum Overkill* sweet music to the ears (though not to the eyes). Using a 'next-generation' VoxelSpace graphics engine, the battle is an armoured one, with ten air and ground vehicles to choose from through 40 single-player missions. More of a strategy affair, AI-controlled troops will defend and repair bases as you drive tanks and fly helicopters to destroy the enemy. No doubt, the multiplayer game will rock bells, although we can't help but predict that it might just end up as an ugly version of *Wargasm*. Still, NovaLogic haven't ruled out the possibility of 3D acceleration. We'll see come summer.

Delta Force fans will lap up *Maximum Overkill*.

Wargasm fans may not be quite so keen on the game.

3D acceleration may come – but don't count on it.

LICENCE TO QUAKE

Electronic Arts, 'Owners Of Sport', are now owners of all things Bond until the year 2003. Having snapped up the rights to make a 3D action-adventure for the next Bond flick *Tomorrow Never Dies*, rumours are circulating that a *Quake III*-powered Bond game is also on the cards. Neither iD or EA have confirmed or denied the stories, but at least it'll help put an end to Nintendo owners harping on about *GoldenEye*.

QUAKE FOUR?

Just to prove that there's life in the old dog yet, Activision have just released *Quake II: Quad Damage*, a compilation featuring the original game, both mission packs and the recently released *Quake II: Extremities* – a collection of the best mods and maps that were hanging around the Internet. Priced at £44.99, *Quad Damage* is excellent value for those yet to experience one of the finest games ever made.

SMOKELESS FUEL

Do you remember the Superman Vs Nick O'Teen anti-smoking infomercials? Did they persuade you to kick the habit? Probably not. Well, Click Health have gone one better than evil Nick, with an anti-smoking surgeon called *Rex Ronan*. Shrunk to the size of a pea he has the unenviable task of cutting away cancerous growths and shooting phlegm balls from the innards of a 40-a-day smoker. Those fearing the wrath of the moral majority can relax – the game is likely to be touted in US health centres. For now.

CHESS MATE

After getting matey with chess grandmaster Gary Kasparov, French publishers Titus have signed a four-year deal to recruit the world's most famous tactician in aiding the development of their ongoing series of chess games (no doubt he'll also come in handy when marketing the game later this year). It's a shame they didn't enlist his services for *Virtual Chess 2*. Not that it would have helped much.

Cleopatra, comin' atcha – erk.

CARRY ON CLEO

Compared to the giddy anticipation that preceded the release of *Settlers III* (*PCZ* #72, 88%), *Caesar III* (*PCZ* #70, 92%) didn't get a look in. However, since both titles have been on the market, it's the latter that has justly received most of the acclaim.

Now *Pharaoh*, due to be released by Sierra in September, features the same blend of real-time resource management and economics, but is set at the time of the growing Egyptian Empire. As well as contending with the flooding Nile, your task is to set about irrigating the barren lands

and grappling with a reluctant labour force (slaves, in other words), to create the pyramids. We'll have to wait and see whether *Pharaoh* will be a wonder of the gaming world, but anticipation is high.

The golden age of slave labour.

DOG & BONE

Cavedog have just opened up their Boneyards online games service. For now, Boneyards will service *Total Annihilation*, but there are plans to include future Cavedog releases (including *TA: Kingdoms*) and even some GT Interactive titles.

As well as allowing the usual range of deathmatches and tournaments, Boneyards includes a new feature for *TA* fans called *Galactic War* where you can fight in massive linked battles for control of a series of planets. After each day, the kills are tallied up and planets can change hands, before the battle moves on to the next arena. Find out more from **www.cavedog.com/boneyards**.

Total Annihilation goes intergalactic.

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

Championship Manager 3 is the fastest-selling UK game ever.

THE Virgin MEGASTORES TOP 10

APR	MAY	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REVIEW SCORE
-	1	**CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3**	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
-	2	CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	89%
-	3	X-WING ALLIANCE	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	88%
-	4	GTA LONDON 1969	ROCKSTAR	TAKE 2	70%
6	5	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	MICROPROSE	HASBRO	87%
3	6	PREMIER MANAGER 99	GREMLIN	GREMLIN	81%
-	7	HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC III	UBI SOFT	UBI SOFT	78%
-	8	JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL	VIRGIN	VIRGIN	89%
-	9	FIFA 99	EA SPORTS	EA	92%
1	10	SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI	FIRAXIS	EA	92%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1999)

THE ChartTrack TOP 10 ELSPA

APR	MAY	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REV SCORE
-	1	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
-	2	CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	89%
-	3	TOCA 2 TOURING CARS	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	93%
-	4	X-WING ALLIANCE	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	88%
-	5	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	MICROPROSE	HASBRO	87%
-	6	GTA LONDON 1969	ROCKSTAR	TAKE 2	70%
-	7	COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY	PYRO	EIDOS	70%
-	8	GRAND THEFT AUTO	TAKE 2	TAKE 2	92%
8	9	HALF-LIFE	SIERRA	HAVAS	95%
4	10	SIMCITY 3000	MAXIS	EA	92%

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"There was never any doubt that *CM3* would be there. It's a fantastic game, but I wish that you didn't have to train players."
Robes, Edinburgh

"Nothing can touch *CM3* in my book. I'm in my fifth season already and I've only had the game a week. They could release *Tiberian Sun* and *Quake III* tomorrow and I'd still stay indoors."
Ed, London

"I bought *CM2* for a fiver just to see what the fuss was about (didn't want to waste money on the sequel in case I didn't like it). Anyway, I fell asleep within minutes. Dull, dull, dull. Great for insomniacs though."
Steve Birch, Sheffield

"It looks like people are buying *GTA* just to buy *GTA London* as well, which is what I intend to do. For the price of one game, £40, you get two games. But, I'm not sure that *GTA* or any of the other games in the top eight deserve to be *above Half-Life*. I think that it really needs to keep advertising its virtues."
Khosh, Reading

"It was risky, but I did it anyway – I bought *X-WING Alliance*. The risk wasn't that the game would be any good, but whether it would run on my P166. And it did – just."
Golden Rod, South London

"*TOCA 2* rightly high in the charts. Oh, the joy of nudging Ford Mondeos off the road and continually smashing them against walls."
Cultist, St Albans

CHART COMMENT

We knew it was going to be big, but we had no idea just how big. *Championship Manager 3* has stormed to the top of the charts, selling a massive 55,000 in just two days to become the fastest-selling PC game in the UK ever – doubling the previous record set by *Command & Conquer: Red Alert*. It even heads the all-formats chart, traditionally dominated by console releases. So may its reign continue.

CM3 isn't the only chartbuster this month. A staggering seven new entries have bowled their way into the top ten, with the original *Grand Theft Auto* making a return thanks to the release of *GTA London*. Soon, though, we'll have this year's second big release, *C&C Tiberian Sun*, no doubt out to claim records of its own. Hopeful *Half-Life* can hang in there.

Richie Shoemaker

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...
1 Star Wars: Supremacy *(LucasArts/Virgin)*
2 Tomb Raider II *(Core/Eidos)*
3 CM97/98 *(Eidos)*
4 Battlezone *(Activision)*
5 Grand Theft Auto *(DMA Design/BMG)*

2 YEARS AGO...
1 Theme Hospital *(Bullfrog/EA)*
2 MDK *(Shiny/Interplay)*
3 Championship Manager 96/97 *(Eidos)*
4 C&C: Red Alert *(Westwood/Virgin)*
5 FIFA 97 *(EA Sports)*

5 YEARS AGO...
1 Mega Race *(Mindscape)*
2 Day Of The Tentacle *(LucasArts/US Gold)*
3 Rebel Assault *(LucasArts/US Gold)*
4 Battle Isle 2 *(Blue Byte)*
5 CD Challenge Pack *(Mindscape)*

DOGFIGHT UNLIMITED

There's no let-up in the crowded skies of WWII

Desert Fighters offers air-to-ground combat.

Flight Combat: Guns for Flight Unlimited at last.

There are 200 missions and 18 flyable planes in *Flight Combat*.

With four WWII flight sims already on the market and another on the way from Psygnosis (see page 36 last issue), you'd have thought the world would have seen enough dogfighting for one year.

Not so. *Starsiege* creators Dynamix are already on the runway with *Desert Fighters*, and Looking Glass Studios have followed Microsoft's lead by strapping a few guns to their own commercial flight sim, *Flight Unlimited II*.

First into the air, though, will be *Desert Fighters*, which Sierra hope to release in October. Chronicling the North African air war from 1941 to 1943, *Desert Fighters* offers 200 missions and 18 flyable planes, including Italian and French designs, as well as better-known models like the Me109 and P51 Mustang. Interestingly, *Desert Fighters* uses a modified *Tribes* engine, which bodes well for multiplayer games and ensures that the deserts of North Africa will roll along like a camel on wheels.

For Looking Glass though, it's back to Europe with *Flight Combat: Thunder Over Europe*. Here, ground units battle it out independently of the air action as you choose from a wealth of fighters and bombers. You can take control of gunner positions, and in multiplayer mode have friends manning other stations. The terrain engine allows for detailed cities to be bombed beyond all recognition. *Flight Combat: Thunder Over Europe* will be available before Christmas.

Also hoping to take a share of your Christmas money is *IL-2 Sturmovich*. Of the three sims, this Russian-developed game looks the most impressive at the moment, with some nifty-looking cloud effects to back up the realistic terrain. Although you're only able to fight for the Communist cause, a lot of detail is going into recreating the Eastern conflict via a semi-dynamic campaign. A lack of flyable planes may put some people off the game, but developers Maddox hope to release more aircraft – including bombers – via the wonderful world of the Internet.

↑ **WWII – won with the help of the factory girls.**

> **"** *Desert Fighters* uses a modified *Tribes* engine, which bodes well for multiplayer games **"**

IL-2 Sturmovich: Little fluffy clouds.

coming soon...the best war game ever

"Forty, crowd-pleasing stunts can be combined to cheers of laughter or cries of derision"

0250

The Sinclair C5 obviously started something.

STUNT BOARD RACER

Spills and thrills from Criterion Studios

Think *Motocross Madness* crossed with snowboarding and blast it into the next millennium. Yes, *Velocity: Trickstyle* – from *Subculture* developers Criterion Studios – is another futuristic racing game in the *WipEout* mould, only this time with a heavy dose of stunt action tacked on for good measure.

Along with nine riders to choose from and four Hover-Tec™ boards, you'll be pleased to know that while the tracks and arenas will be thoroughly 21st century, landmarks such as Big Ben and the Empire State Building will still be standing as you whizz through multi-level courses in Tokyo, London and Manhattan. The stunt side of things enables you to try out over 40 crowd-pleasing manoeuvres, each of which can be combined to draw cheers of joy or howls of derision as you fall flat on your back attempting the impossible. Of course, in common with Microsoft's contemporary dirtbike effort, other game modes will also be chucked in, ranging from straight racing to Bomb Tag.

Released through GT Interactive, *Velocity* should speed onto the shelves in the autumn.

Console action on PC? Probably.

Choose from nine different surfers

Each rider has over 20 different skills.

BUFFY THE PINBALL PLAYER

Balls to *Aliens Vs Predator* – literally. Fox Interactive are releasing *Sci-Fi Pinball*, a top-down shift-key destroyer featuring four tables based on their top sci-fi licences *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, *Aliens*, *The Fly* and *Predator*, as well a bonus table for the '50s version of *The Fly*. Full-motion video clips and soundbites will be incorporated into the game ("F**king game over, man"), and up to four players will be able to play on one PC. Look out for *Sci-Fi Pinball* later this month.

Buffy The Vampire Slayer.

Towers always look better with a nipple on top.

YOOT WHO?

You know, Yoot Saito, the creator of *SimTower* (*PCZ* #28, 70%). No, we've never heard of him either. However, as is the trend with god games, Mr Saito is putting his name on the line for the sequel, *Yoot's Tower*.

Like the original, the aim is to build a successful tower block, complete with apartments, shops, elevators and restaurants. And, as well as balancing your finances, you have to think about fulfilling your residents' needs. Although still in 2D, the game will feature a slew of new features such as multiple towers connected by sky bridges, and specialist shops and editable features that can be traded over the Internet. You'll also be able to choose the location for your tower, from beachfront resorts to an urban metropolis. Thanks to SegaPC, building will commence this autumn.

If your sprinkler system isn't working, you can always stick a water cannon to a helicopter.

YOUR MOST WANTED

A look at the games you're most looking forward to over the next few months, and when they're expected to arrive

1	**Kingpin** (Xatrix/Interplay)	June
2	**Driver** (Reflections/GT)	Aug
3	**Duke Nukem 4Ever** (3D Realms/GT)	Oct
4	**C&C: Tiberian Sun** (Westwood/EA)	June
5	**Quake III Arena** (iD/Activision)	July
6	**Team Fortress II** (Valve/Sierra)	Oct
7	**Age Of Empires II** (Ensemble/Microsoft)	Autumn
8	**Diablo 2** (Blizzard/Sierra)	Oct
9	**Black & White** (Lionhead/EA)	Oct
10	**Loose Cannon** (Digital Anvil/Microsoft)	July

WIN! Submit your vote and go into the hat for a mystery prize draw. Email us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with the subject line **'Most Wanted'**, or write to the usual address.

TWO KINGDOMS

There's more fantasy strategy on the way

With *TA: Kingdoms* and *Age Of Empires II* soon to appear, spare a thought for two other real-time fantasy strategy titles – *Seven Kingdoms II* and *Majesty: Sovereign Of Ardania* – which are due to appear at the end of the summer.

Majesty builds upon the usual elements of fantasy real-time strategy by promising a heap of RPG and adventure elements – in fact developers Cyberlore even go so far as to describe *Majesty* as a 'kingdom simulator'. Along with the usual range of buildings and units,

your role of King goes further than simply accumulating wealth, as you're also faced with recruiting independently minded heroes to send on various quests. They in turn gain experience and, depending on their personal allegiances, either fight with you or turn against you. To recruit warriors you have to post rewards throughout your lands, although they won't all be persuaded to join you. And with different races under your rule, you've got a job on your hands balancing everyone's needs and maintaining the status quo.

The original *Seven Kingdoms* received a

lukewarm reception last year (*PCZ* #60, 68%), but numero deux looks set to improve on the original in several ways. Also boasting RPG elements (must be the next big thing), *Seven Kingdoms II* expands on the *Civilization*-type elements that the original tried so hard to pull off.

Hopefully both games will give *TA: Kingdoms* and *Age Of Empires II* a run for their money – we like a big ol' scrap.

Majesty: fantasy and RTS.

MAJESTY: SOVEREIGN OF ARDANIA

PUBLISHER: TBC
RELEASE DATE: Summer

Looks like we missed all the action.

The ones flat on the ground could well be dead. They're definitely not feeling well.

A goblin village under attack.

Palace guards come to your aid.

SEVEN KINGDOMS II

PUBLISHER: Interactive Magic
RELEASE DATE: Summer

Seven Kingdoms II: looking good.

Seven Kingdoms II's graphics are certainly a major improvement on the original.

Espionage plays an even bigger role this time round.

The Fryhtans are the evil new addition to the *SK* world.

"We're excited about Creative's approach to delivering a whole new 3D audio experience with Environmental Audio"

PAUL PROVENZANO, VP PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT, FOX INTERACTIVE

NET SPACE

○ One of the ships in *Parsec*.

Jumpgate's ships display impressive shield effects

Look out for some good weapon effects in *Parsec*.

Two more space sims battle it out online

> *Jumpgate* enables you to engage in trade and interstellar war, either as privateers or in a team
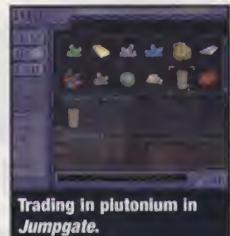
Trading in plutonium in *Jumpgate*.

Centre your sights on *Jumpgate*.

Must be one of them there jumpgates.

With Origin's *Privateer On-Line* currently in the pipeline, and Chris Roberts focusing his attention away from the movie industry and back on games with his own online space sim *Freelancer*, news is coming in of two other Web-based space combat sims.

Taking its cue from the eight-bit classic *Elite*, Netdevil's *Jumpgate* enables you to engage in trade and interstellar war, either as privateers or as part of a team. The game universe will be spilt into sectors, each linked by jumpgates, enabling you to trade between home and various worlds. Later in the game you will be able to upgrade your ships or buy larger ones such as bulk cruisers and freighters, with friends and allies flying escort. A public beta version of the game should be available in June – keep an eye on **www.netdevil.com** for more details.

No less exciting is *Parsec*, for the simple fact that it will be entirely free. Although trading is off the list, dogfighting is right at the top, and with some *Freespace*-style effects, it looks more than a little impressive so far. Like *Jumpgate*, sectors will be split among different servers connected by stargates. A demo should be available soon. Check **www.parsec.org** for more info.

SHORTS

ROGUE TROOPER

The sequel to last year's *Rainbow Six* (*PCZ* #69, 89%) has been officially announced and will henceforth be known as *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear*. Like the original game it will feature a combination of squad-level, first-person action and 3D strategy. Eighteen missions are planned, as well as new weapons and items, weather effects and greatly enhanced AI. Hopefully we'll have more information next issue.

CANNED DOG

Cavedog have decided to shelve their 3D adventure *Elysium*, a *Resident Evil*-style game that was 25 per cent complete and originally scheduled to arrive next year.

John Cutter, the game's chief designer who worked on *Betrayal At Krondor* (*PCZ* #5, 91%), is said to be working on a new game, while *Elysium* team members have been assigned roles on other titles. In time though, it's hoped another developer will pick up the game.

Work on the first-person adventure *Amen: The Awakening* remains unaffected (see Top Story on page 16).

£10 OFF*
STAR TREK: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION

GAMEPLAY

*Recommended retail price

Star Trek: Birth Of The Federation is the latest *Star Trek* game from MicroProse, taking the rich *Star Trek* universe into the realms of strategy for the first time and combining resource management, diplomacy, research and 3D space combat.

Together with Gameplay, one of the UK's leading mail order companies, we can

exclusively offer you this massive game for the ridiculously low sum of £24.99, if you're willing to wait a few days for delivery to your door – and there are no postage & packaging costs either.

To qualify for your discount, phone Gameplay's hotline now on 0113 234 0444, or email Gameplay direct at **gameplayuk@ aol.com**. In either case, don't forget to say *PC ZONE* sent you, and Quote: PCZ995.

Expect all of your favourite races to appear.

Combat sequences in full 3D.

Fatboy Shatner, nowhere to be seen.

Negotiate with friends and enemies.

TECHHEAD

News on Melissa and Dave, plus all the latest hardware announcements

✪ **WORDS** Warren Chrismas

MELISSA GETS MEDIA EXCITED

Here is that news story you asked for... don't show anyone else

Sales of anti-virus software are expected to soar following the massive press coverage given to the Melissa virus in early April. More than 100,000 organisations worldwide were hit by the virus in a matter of days. Many, including Microsoft and Intel, were forced to temporarily shut down their entire email systems to stop the virus spreading further.

Melissa is not an .exe program-infecting virus, but a Word 97 macro virus which is propagated in the form of an email containing an infected Word document as an attachment. The subject header of the email usually reads: "Important message from XXXX" (where XXXX is the name of the unwitting sender); the message reads: "Here is that document you asked for... don't show anyone else ;-)".

When a user opens the infected document with Word, the macro virus is executed. It extracts the first 50 addresses (or groups of addresses) from Microsoft Outlook's address book and sends a message and the macro virus to each one.

However, if you're not using Word 97 and Outlook 98 (or pre-release Office 2000 versions), the macro will have no effect. Also, despite the media fuss, Melissa causes no damage to data on PCs, although the extra Internet traffic created by such viruses can paralyse email infrastructures.

Within just a few days of the virus appearing, David Smith, a 30-year-old network programmer from New Jersey, was arrested and charged with, among other offences, interrupting public communications and third-degree theft of computer services. The combined charges carry a maximum penalty of 40 years imprisonment.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM *PC ZONE*

While Melissa hit the business community hardest, home users, especially those who are online, are still very much under a constant threat from malicious viruses. At the end of last year, the CIH virus swept rapidly through the gaming community, and we've had several letters from victims of the Happy99 macro virus (see Dear Wazza on page 142).

PC ZONE highly recommends that you install and regularly update a package such as Norton Anti-Virus (details at www.symantec.co.uk**), Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus Toolkit (**www.drsolomon.com**) or McAfee Viruscan**

(www.mcafee.com**). All these are available from high-street stores for less than the price of a single game. Check out the relevant websites for demonstration and online versions. We also strongly advise Word and Excel users to enable the Macro Virus Protection option (go to Options from the Tool menu) in the programs. When opening a document you should always choose to "disable macros" if asked, unless you are completely sure of the purpose of the embedded macros in the file.**

This has been a public service announcement.

FACTCANNON

✪ Logitech (**www.logitech.com/uk**) have announced a USB mouse which they claim has a response time five times faster than the standard rodent. The Wingman Mouse, which has been specifically designed for gamers, features a weighty ball to aid precision, and a thumb indentation for better grip. Bundled with a copy of *Shogo: Mobile Armour Division*, it's due on sale this month priced £29.99. Meanwhile, Microsoft have launched a matt black USB version of their popular IntelliMouse priced at £34.99.

✪ Ziplabel have launched a hardware/software combo which enables you to use PlayStation, Saturn, Atari, MegaDrive, Jaguar, SNES and other kinds of console controllers via a PC's parallel port. DirectPad Pro is compatible with any DirectX game. Details at **www.ziplabel.com**.

✪ Creative Labs (**www.creaf.com**) have launched a new DVD upgrade kit in the US which features a six-speed DVD-ROM drive (24-speed CD-ROM) and an MPEG2 graphics decoder capable of resolutions of up to 1600x1200. The PC-DVD Encore 6X Dxr3 costs around $250 (£156). Details of a UK release have yet to be announced.

✪ Market research company Strategy Analytics estimate that all new PCs will ship with DVD-ROM drives by 2003. However, while some 40,000 DVD discs are being sold each week in the UK, it could be five to ten years before DVD video takes over from the VHS video format in Europe. Worldwide, over 2500 different movies are available on DVD. And about ten games.

SONY SUE DAVE!

No, not David versus Goliath, but David versus consumer electronics giant

Confusion reigns on the emulator scene as Sony file a lawsuit against the host of the popular emulation website Dave's Classic, and faces a new menace in the form of a new PC-based PlayStation emulator.

Sony have allegedly slapped a copyright infringement lawsuit against 'Dave' and parent company ActionWorld for distributing copies of the PlayStation BIOS which could, in theory, be used with illegal third-party emulator software. Sony are seeking injunctive relief and damages. Dave's Classics (**www.davesclasssics.com**) is currently suspended due to the legal action, although the message board section is still open.

Meanwhile, a commercial PC-based PlayStation emulator called Bleem! has become available on the

Net – for now, at least. Currently avoiding the attentions of Sony's legal department, the $39.99 program enables around 80 per cent of PlayStation releases (original, legal discs only) to be played on a 166MHz Pentium or better running Windows 95/98 with DirectX 6.

The Bleem! website (**www.bleem.com**) is said to have recorded 600,000 hits on its first day of operation, with some 150,000 visitors downloading the demo. The demo, which is still available, enables you to test PlayStation titles but does not feature sound (except for CD music) or support for 3D accelerators or enhanced processors.

Sony are currently in court with Connectix, the company behind a similar Apple Mac-based emulator called Virtual Game Station. The Japanese

Sony's *Gran Turismo* running at 640x480 on a PC using Bleem! Nice.

giant is expected to take similar action against the creators of Bleem!, although the designers claim that it has been designed from the ground up. and as such does not break intellectual property laws.

We'll have more news, including a full look at the emulator itself, in next month's issue, on sale Thursday 3 June.

Russian MiGs: nasty.
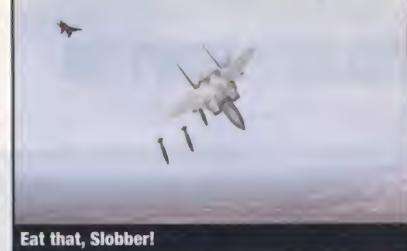
Eat that, Slobber!

USAF will feature real-terrain data.

THEATRE OF EIGHT

Jane's Simulations bring the entire US Air Force to the small screen

Rather than focusing on just one plane, Jane's Simulations are set to broaden their horizons with USAF. The game, which includes eight flyable planes from the ageing Phantom and A-10 Thunderbolt to the high-tech F-22 Raptor and F-117 Stealth fighter, will feature a total of 62 missions encompassing a combination of past, present and future semi-dynamic campaigns set in the Gulf, Vietnam and a possible future European air war.

USAF will be the first game to run on Jane's online World War service, which should also serve all future Jane's simulations, with tanks, ships and planes all able to battle it out in cyberspace. Unfortunately, a UK on-sale date for USAF itself has yet to be announced, although a year-end release is thought to be feasible.

BLUFFER'S Guide to...

VoIP

⊗ WHAT IS IT?
Voice over IP (also referred to as Internet Telephony and IP Telephony) refers to voice and video information being sent point-to-point across the Internet, rather than via the telephone network. A major advantage of the system is that it avoids the tariffs set by providers such as BT and Cable & Wireless.

⊗ WHO CREATED IT?
The VoIP protocol is being promoted by many major hardware vendors including two of the largest, 3Com and Cisco. Software products, such as Quarterdeck's obsolete WebPhone, were actually available to the public some three or four years back.

⊗ HOW DOES IT WORK?
A special protocol makes sure that all data packets are delivered in the correct order and at the correct time. Although Internet conversations are often as clear as those on regular phone lines, fluctuating bandwidth, modem speeds and other traffic have a huge effect on quality – your mileage may vary. Private networks, and LANs and WANs in large companies don't suffer the same problem, and VoIP systems are now being seen as viable alternatives to an internal phone system.

⊗ WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IT?
The best place to go is www.netspeak.com.

FIRING SQUAD

FireTeam is an online-only 2D blaster with the emphasis on action. Smaller in scope to Infantry (previewed on page 54), there are only three characters on offer – scout, commando and heavy gunner – but you can gang up into teams of up to four players and battle it out in capture the flag and traditional deathmatch arenas. If you can't wait until it's released in September, you can buy it now for $60 (£37) (www.fireteam.com). At least it's free to play and comes with a headset and software for real-time communication with your team-mates. Which helps.

Kind of an online, futuristic Diablo.

According to one US website, FireTeam is the "Online Game Of The Year".

www.ukpcgc.com

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

The search is about to begin for the best gamesplayers in the UK. If you haven't entered your team yet, you'd better get a move on. Here, then, are the games you will be playing, and the conditions you'll be competing under. And remember: practice makes perfect, folks

IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY

PCZONE COMPUTER SHOPPER THE PLAYING FIELDS

AND SPONSORED BY

msn Gaming Zone www.zone.msn.co.uk

3D NOW! Technology from AMD

THE LINE-UP

This is the full low-down on the levels you'll be playing in the Championships. Please note that the *Age Of Empires* level is taken from the *Rise To Rome* expansion pack, so you'll need this in order to practice for the main event. Similarly, the *Total Annihilation* level is taken from the *Core Contingency* pack, so the same applies for that one. In the event of any changes, team members will be notified in advance. Check the website (www.ukpcgc.com) for a the most up-to-date list of the competition rules

UNREAL (GT Interactive)

Version: 2.20
Map: DM Healpod
Opponents: four in-game bots
Game settings: deathmatch, game speed 100 per cent, classic, autoaim off, choice of original models, weapons stay, timelimit 20 minutes, 3D Now! enhanced
Controllers: PS2 keyboard and/or MS USB Intellimouse
Scoring: highest number of frags, least total number of kills by the bots
Highest score so far: 31 frags

QUAKE II (Activision)

Version: 3.20
Map: Q2DM8
Opponents: four Gladiator bots
Game settings: deathmatch, weapons stay off, timelimit 20 minutes, choice of male or female standard models, 3D Now! enhanced
Controllers: PS2 keyboard and/or MS USB

Intellimouse
Scoring: highest number of frags, least total number of kills by the bots
Highest score so far: 41 frags

AGE OF EMPIRES (Microsoft)

Version: 1.0b plus *Rise Of Rome* expansion
ON THE CD
Map: custom scenario
Opponents: one computer-controlled civilisation
Game Settings: path finding high, fixed positions, iron age, full tech tree, timelimit 5,000 years, medium difficulty, fastest speed.
Controllers: PS2 keyboard and/or MS USB Intellimouse
Scoring: fastest to annihilate opposing civilisation, highest score
Fastest time so far: 8min

TOTAL ANNIHILATION (GT Interactive)

Version: 3.1 with *Core Contingency* update

Map: John's Pass
Opponents: three computer-controlled opponents (two Core, one Arm) allied together
Game settings: all settings default except metal 2000, energy 2000, commander dies game continues, location fixed, unmapped, true line of sight, hard difficulty, choice of speed, choice of ARM or CORE, optional use of +shootall and +noshake.
Time: 20 minutes maximum
Controllers: PS2 keyboard and/or MS USB Intellimouse
Scoring: fastest to annihilate opponents, highest number of points after 20 minutes
Highest score so far: 1820 points

MOTOCROSS MADNESS (Microsoft)

Version: original
Course: three laps of Baja (Yuma Dunes waypoint #2)
Opponents: ten computer-controlled competitors
Game settings: choice of bike, choice of rider, bike may be tweaked in garage
Time: 20 minutes maximum (competitors will be stopped when their combined time is greater than 20 minutes)
Controllers: PS2 keyboard or MS Sidewinder force feedback joystick or MS

Sidewinder Freestyle Pro
Scoring: fastest time.
Fastest time so far: 15min 39sec

NEED FOR SPEED III (EA)

Version: original
Course: four laps of Summit
Opponents: full grid, normal skill, class A
Game settings: single race, any standard car, car tuning allowed, no driving assists, feedback enabled
Time: 20 minutes maximum (competitors will be stopped when their time exceeds 20 minutes)
Controllers: PS2 keyboard and/or MS Sidewinder force feedback wheel (with pedals)
Scoring: fastest time
Fastest time so far: 16min 32sec

ACTUA SOCCER 3 (Gremlin)

Version: original
Pitch: Twin Peaks

3DNOW!™

Technology from AMD

3D NOW!

The more observant among you will have noticed the legend 'optimised for 3D Now!' alongside *Quake II*, *Unreal* and *Actua Soccer 3* in the Line-up panel. This means that these games will have superior audio and visual quality, and will therefore run more smoothly than you're used to. This is a good thing. Increased frame rates mean quicker response times, so expect to be competing in these genres under the best possible conditions. But remember: your opponents will have the same advantages. Just so you know.

We'll be looking at AMD's revolutionary technology in more detail next issue, on sale Thursday 3 June. For more info go to www.3dnow.de/gaming_uk2/

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

Opponents: custom team (UKPCGC All Stars)
Game settings: Semi Pro, game speed medium, match length 15 extra time off, referee David Elleray, transfers off, wind off, free kicks, injuries, bookings, no replays, substitutions, offside, no penalty shoot-out, equalise stats, choice of a recognised UK league team, time: 15, 3D Now! enhanced.
Controllers: PS2 keyboard and/or MS Sidewinder Gamepad
Scoring: goal difference, most number of goals, percentage possession, number of shots, number of corners
Highest score so far: 6-5 (from 1-4 down!) Our esteemed Editor Chris Anderson set this record himself!

JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL (Virgin)

Version: original
Table: snooker
Opponents: Clueless Colin
Game settings: play one frame
Time: 20 minutes maximum
Controllers: PS2 keyboard and/or MS USB Intellimouse
Scoring: highest score against Clueless Colin, biggest break, fastest time to beat Clueless Colin
Highest score so far: 20 (poor)

Microsoft's Gaming Zone is the place to go for that elusive team-mate.

IN THE ZONE

Looking for a team-mate? Check out Microsoft's Gaming Zone

With the capacity to play more than 50 different games online, Microsoft's Gaming Zone is the world's number one multiplayer site, with over three million registered users and well over 20,000 people playing online at any one time.

Set up specifically for the UK Games Championships, MSN Gaming Zone have a dedicated UK site for teams to practice against each other in preparation for the qualifiers and the Grand Final. Not only that, but players wishing to join a team in their particular region will also find a bulletin board where you can either make your skills known or advertise for someone to join your ranks. If you're having problems finding a strategy fan to back up your shooting skills, or a driving nut to complement your footballing prowess, you won't find a better place to get connected. And there are even more prizes up for grabs each week in the run-up to the Final, on top of the prizes we're awarding in the competition itself. So what are you waiting for? Go to http://zone.msn.com/uk/news/competition.asp now. Go, go, GO!

Practice your skills online before taking on the UK's gaming elite in the Championships.

SPECTRUM GAMES LIVE AGAIN

Classic games are coming to the PC

If you thought that bedroom programming was a thing of the past, think again. While most of us with fond memories of Spectrum gaming can happily play on emulators, there is a thriving community of developers actually rewriting old games for the PC. From *Jet Pac* to Mike 'Midwinter' Singleton's *Lords Of Midnight*, dozens of games are either available or in development.

Perhaps one of the most innovative in development is Chris Wild's *Midnight Project*, which aims to bring *Lords Of Midnight* and *Doomdark's Revenge* to the PC with icons, mouse control and even a scenario editor. An early – very playable – version is ready that, oddly enough, is even better than Mike Singleton's remake.

RetroSpec are a small group of coders working on a host of remakes such as *Skool Daze*, which remains one of the most original games ever made. Others in the group are working on *Sabre Wulf*, *Jet Pac* and even *WulfRyder: Knight Lore II*, a new sequel to the ground-breaking isometric adventure.

The idea behind such remakes is to keep the gameplay intact while updating graphics and sound. You won't need a 3D accelerator, just a humble PC, a few megs of RAM and a few fond memories. And don't think that programming has stopped on the Spectrum itself – *Dune 2* and *Sonic The Hedgehog* are currently being crammed into 128K.

New coloured characters for *Skool Daze*.

LUXOR THE MOONPRINCE
He stands at the Tower of the Moon, looking Southeast to the Downs of Shadows.
Chris Wild's updated *Lords Of Midnight*.

HORACE GOES SURFING

Chuckie Egg in 3D? Surely not.

Check out these sites for more on classic remakes

http://w1.2222.telia.com/~u222200549/remakes/ A great place to start for remakes of games for all old machines

www.anam.demon.co.uk/ Chris Wild's *Midnight Project*

www.uq.net.au/~zzjbrain/retro.htm The RetroSpec homepage, with links to current projects *Skool Daze* and *Sabre Wulf*

www.cdworld.co.uk/craig/jsmw.html • www.andyn.demon.co.uk/manic.htm • http://members.xoom.com/manicminer/ PC versions of *Manic Miner*, *Jet Set Willy*, and more

http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~scarecrow/jim/law/index.html *Law* – an enhanced java version of *Chaos*, the game that inspired *Magic & Mayhem*

www.starquake.demon.co.uk/index_new.html Java versions of 32 Spectrum classics

www.para-01.demon.co.uk/ *Jet Man* and *Burps* – an *Atic Atac* clone

www.dcs.warwick.ac.uk/~csufh/chuckie/ The *Chuckie Egg* Appreciation Society. Bless

http://shareware.gamespot.com/action/0003vg.html *3D Ant Attack* for Windows

Jet Pac, from Richard 'Skool Daze' Jordan, is set for a change of play scene.

WulfRyder: Knight Lore II is a sequel to the original isometric adventure.

Manic Miner in glorious technicolour – for more, pop along to the website.
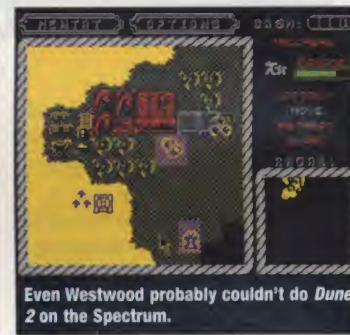
Even Westwood probably couldn't do *Dune 2* on the Spectrum.

FOR THE RECORD

"Personally, I'm a tea drinker. I'm shaky, nervous, and stressed enough without coffee."
Matt Powers, producer on EA's *Slave Zero*

"We may tune the controls… but otherwise it should be the spitting image of the PC version."
Shiny's Dave Perry, hopefully lying about the differences between the PC and PSX versions of *Messiah*

"Dumber than a real person and smarter than a dog."
Dave Georgeson, producer on *Heavy Gear II*, gets technical on the game's AI

"*Uprising 2* is trying to push the boundaries of game design, 3D engines, chaos theory, and interpersonal single-payer, rock-oriented thermal-perspective boundary layer consanguinity."
John Eberhardt, 3DO Studios, talking on a different level to the rest of us it seems. Hello John, are you there?

SKOOL DAZE

Talking of old days, *Keith Pullin* looks at *Starquake* on the Sinclair Spectrum

Steve Crow was the first programming superstar as far as I'm concerned. *Wizard's Lair* and *Firelord* were both superb, but *Starquake* was a work of pure genius – his pièce de résistance, and an all-time classic.

Fourteen years after its release, this hectic arcade shooter possesses such a unique, timeless magic that it makes the contemporary glamour and glitz of 3Dfx graphics look as empty and superficial as Lara Croft's personality.

One of the main reasons for *Starquake*'s resounding playability is its ability to give you a different game every time you play, thanks to the randomisation of such elements as power-ups, important items, and enemies. You could complete it over 100 times and still feel the desire to play it 100 times more. How often does that happen nowadays?

Starquake was a game that was way ahead of its time and, to be fair, updating it would be a travesty – it's that good it just doesn't need it. *Starquake* was, is, and always will be gaming perfection.
Find out about Starquake at www.fortunecity.com/underworld/pacman/448/.
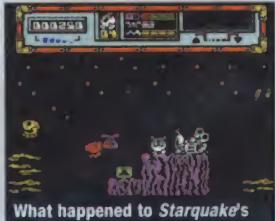
What happened to *Starquake*'s publisher, *Bubble Bus*, then?

Starquake received 96 per cent in *Crash* magazine in 1985.

CONSOLE ZONE

A console's success depends on its games, which bodes well for Sega's Dreamcast

● CASTER OF DREAMS Matthew Burgess

Despite falling sales in Japan, the future looks rosy for Dreamcast gamers. Sure, 'PlayStation 2' is a cloud on its horizon, but if you're looking for shit-hot games to impress your mates, the DC is the console of choice, especially with the latest title, *Power Stone,* from kung fu masters Capcom.

Power Stone is a hugely playable beat 'em up with a difference. The 3D environment in which it is set is fully interactive, enabling your character of choice to swing from lampposts and hurl fixtures and fittings, as well as deliver the usual punches and kicks. Around these arenas are scattered a range of weapons, and the Power Stones of the title. Collect three of these and your character morphs into an ass-kicking superbeing.

Moving at a constant 60fps and sporting a plethora of cool graphical effects, *Power Stone* provides enough gaming joy to keep you happy until the arrival of what promises to be one of the games of the year...

Metropolis is a new street racing game that looks set to make *Gran Turismo 2* look like *Pole Position.* Recently unveiled to a select few by developers Bizarre Creations, it makes *Power Stone* rock like AC/DC would if they were made of mountains.

The game is set in London, San Francisco and Tokyo, each of which has three different circuits. However, these aren't just loosely modelled street maps with a few landmarks thrown in, à la *GTA London.* The designers travelled to each location and spent months photographing them, so the environment within each circuit (a four-square-mile area) looks exactly the same as its real-world counterpart – Aberdeen Angus steakhouses and everything.

It's only 20 per cent complete so far, but already the game exhibits an obsessive degree of detail. As the demo car (a Fiat Barchetta) slides round a Tokyo street corner, you can see the brake discs start to glow through the alloy wheels, and the trees wave in the wind of your passing (so to speak). The Dreamcast's analogue triggers lend themselves well to acceleration and braking, and the 'feel' of the car is spot on.

Bizarre Creations let slip that the game will contain a 'story' mode as well as the arcade-esque circuit racing, enabling free driving within the cities, just like *Turbo Esprit* on the Spectrum (hopefully).

Will *Metropolis* make it to the PC? Well, if Sega know what's good for them – and after the Saturn fiasco, they'd better – then they'll tie it in as a Dreamcast exclusive. So don't hold your breath. Oh, and don't cross the road without looking both ways either.

The Dreamcast's answer to Need For Speed.

Metropolis: each track contains 32,000 different textures – that's a lot.

Power Stone: beating seven bells out of someone has never looked so pretty.

AirQuake 2: Wargasmic.
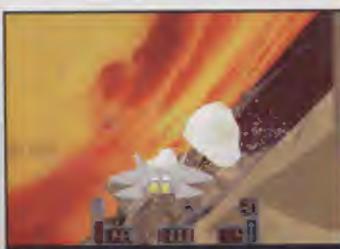
Damaged planes pour smoke.

Some levels are based on Baghdad.

AFTERBURNER

AirQuake takes to the skies – again

AirQuake, regarded by many as the best total conversion (TC) for the original Quake, is about to spawn a sequel. AirQuake 2 again takes the fight far above the usual brown landscape as you loop around in jet fighters and helicopters. New to this version, though, is an auto-pilot mode, locational damage, and the option to drive tanks and mow down infantry. Not only that, but a full single-player campaign is incorporated, enabling you to destroy bases in a variety of environments. Vehicles that will make it into the final version include the F-16, B-2 Stealth Bomber, A-10 Thunderbolt, Tornado, Warrior APC, Apache helicopter and the M1 Abrams tank. The first version of AirQuake 2 should be ready within a matter of weeks. http://airquake2.converted2.com has all the details.

GIANTS ON THE RAMPAGE

Return of a classic

The 16-bit classic Rampage is on its way back. Like the arcade original, Monstro! is the complete opposite of SimCity: choose one of ten giant cartoon killers and go about levelling towns, cities and army bases, eating civilians as you go. However, developers Disintegrator are keen to point out that their game is more than a simple remake: "Comparing Monstro! to Rampage is like comparing Heretic II to Gauntlet." In full 3D and featuring a mission and monster editor, Monstro! will also come bundled with a host of new power-ups, weapons and multiplayer options. No UK publisher has been found as yet, but the game should be completed by Christmas.

Always tenderise your steak beforehand.

There are ten monsters to choose from.

TEAMTALK

A quick chat with the part-timers who make games not for money, but for love

Who are you, and what are you working on?
"Phil Daniels, a 38-year-old world creator and point of contact for Maverick Developments. Currently we're finishing *Wanted! The Quake II Western Pack*, which is a conversion of *Quake II*, bringing the atmosphere of the old American Wild West to the first-person shooter genre. Check out www.wantedq2.com.

"We have recently released *Drug Barons*, which is a mini-pack add-on for *Half-Life*, the first, single-player add-on available, and the only one that makes in-depth use of Valve's scripting entities. *Redemption*, a sequel to this product, is already in development. It will take the quality of the *Drug Barons* product and thrash it with variety, gameplay, and atmosphere to die for."

How many people are working on the project, and where is everyone based?
"Maverick Developments currently has only three guys. Until recently *Wanted!* was totally the work of Maurizio Majelli (Italy) and myself (England). We took on Mariano Modano recently for his outstanding keyboard skills.

"The *Half-Life* mini pack *Drug Barons* was a solo effort. *Redemption* will again feature my level design work, but this time helped greatly by Tony 'Tone' Newton (New Zealand)."

Gordon Freeman goes east in Redemption.

What do you do for a living, and how much time do you devote to Wanted?
"I've managed sales teams for 11 years. Currently I'm the branch manager for an International company.

"I reckon to spend 50 hours a week on level design work. That's on top of a 40-hour week in a full-time job. Mad? Yes, probably."

When will Wanted! and Redemption be finished?
"*Wanted!* is a little late: the playable demo has been out for about a month, and the final product should be finished when your readers get this mag. *Redemption* will take a little longer

Half-Life meets Theme Park in Redemption.

– it'll be out when it's finished. I bet you hate it when people say that!"

What are your hopes for Wanted?
"That people will say: 'At last, something different from damn marine-in-space scenarios.' That it will start a cult following of the main character, and that we can do a sequel using a more modern or enhanced engine. That it will sell thousands of copies and make me rich and famous. That 'the man' will see it, like it and make me an offer I can't refuse."

What would be your ideal job in the games industry?
"Two choices: get employed by Gabe Newell at Valve to create worlds for *Half-Life 2*, or work from my home in the UK making levels, heading up a team making add-on products, marketing, and fronting it all to a publisher."

What game are you most looking forward to, and why?
"There's no contest: the single-player game that Valve make after *Team Fortress II*. There's never been a group of individuals who have meshed so well into a team in this industry before and who are so intent on bringing the feeling of actually *being there*. They have a clear understanding of what they want. I believe that next time around they will be very close to their goals."

Wanted!: coming out… any second now.

The game could be Maverick's big hit.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Developers 3D Realms, who seem to be to busy playing with themselves
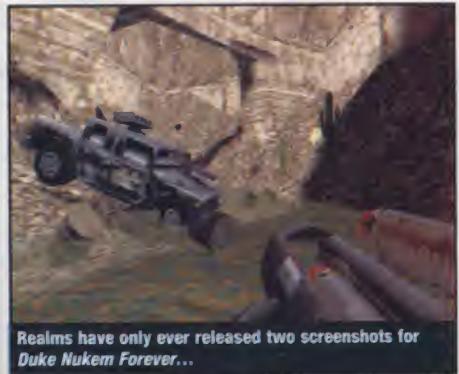
Realms have only ever released two screenshots for *Duke Nukem Forever*...

...both of which show off the old *Quake II* engine.

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER
(3D Realms/GT)

LAST SEEN *PCZ #66*

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE *December 1998*

From humble beginnings starring in a 2D side-scrolling platform game, *Duke* has become one of the gaming world's most recognisable characters, and is soon to appear on GameBoy Color. On the PC though, *Duke Nukem Forever* remains one of this year's most anticipated releases.

After switching from using the *Quake II* engine to *Unreal*'s, we were assured the transition would be a short one. However, the games industry being what it is, *Duke 4* has slipped way beyond its original release date, being put back past March and into the autumn.

The most recent development in the *Duke* world is that 3D Realms have licensed a new technology called Multi-Resolution Geometry that enables more characters on screen at the same time. 3D Realms have been pointing out that since first-person shooters have gone full 3D, developers have had to cut down on the on-screen bodycount. The results should mean a return to the mass carnage of *Doom* and *Duke 3D*.

Surprisingly, 3D Realms *won't* be showing *Duke Forever* at this year's E³ Expo in May, preferring to spend the time on the game rather than talk to sweaty-palmed journalists. Not that we mind, as long as the game is good. Valve took a similar stance with *Half-Life* at last year's ECTS, and look how good that turned out.

OUT *October 1998*

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ *Prince Naseem Boxing* from Codemasters has slipped to September **++STOP++** Eidos release *Tomb Raider II: The Gold Mask*, the original game plus four news levels, as part of their Premier budget collection at the end of May **++STOP++** The real-time war is hotting up, with the year's two big guns, *C&C Tiberian Sun* and Cavedog's *TA: Kingdoms*, slated for a June release (definitely). Read our exclusive review of *Kingdoms* next month **++STOP++** A sequel for *Warzone 2100* is a certainty. Tentatively named *Warzone 2120*, it's currently scheduled for release at the end of 2001 **++END**S

Wireplay
The games network from BT

Online News is sponsored by BT Wireplay

JOIN THE TEAM

Help us make what are already the best cover discs even better

The Dennis Electronic Publishing Unit (EPU) prides itself on the quality of its cover CDs. Working closely alongside *PC ZONE*, *Computer Shopper*, *Computer Buyer* and *PC Pro*, we need someone to help us maintain this success. The job involves testing software, writing installation scripts and building and testing the CDs. You'll need to have an in-depth knowledge of PC hardware and software, know the difference between DirectX and Generation X, and be able to locate drivers, patches and programs on the Internet.

If you believe you fit the bill and fancy joining us, send your CV along with a covering letter to:
Sarah Gilliver, EPU Production Manager, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

The Man who KNOWS

DEATH, SEX & MONEY

Video games kill. It's official. Or at least it is according to the parents of three US students murdered during a high school shooting spree. On 1 December 1997, 14-year-old **Michael Carneal** took six guns to **Heath High School** in **Paducah, Kentucky,** waited for a voluntary prayer session to end, and unleashed his arsenal with fatal consequences, also wounding five others. The bereaved parents have announced a $130m lawsuit against a number of games publishers, two Internet porn sites and the makers of the 1995 **Leonardo DiCaprio** film *The Basketball Diaries*, in which the *Titanic* star guns down his teacher and classmates in a dream sequence. The lawsuit claims that Carneal – currently serving a 25-year sentence – was influenced by these aspects of the entertainment industry into committing his heinous crime.

Carneal is a big fan of **Doom**, **Quake** and **Mortal Kombat**, and police who seized the computer games also found evidence of **Wolfenstein 3D**, **Resident Evil**, **Redneck Rampage** , **Nightmare Creatures**, **Final Fantasy VII** and the **MechWarrior** series. Among the defendants listed are **Apogee, iD, GT, Sega of America, Atari, Acclaim, Interplay, Midway, Nintendo of America, Activision, Sony, Capcom, Eidos** and **Squaresoft**. The complaint contends that these companies produced and supplied games that made the violence "pleasurable and attractive" and disconnected the savageness from natural consequences. Additionally, the plaintiffs claim the games taught Carneal to shoot in a fashion that made him an "extraordinarily effective killer".

Commenting on the case, **Scott Miller** of **Apogee** maintained: "Blaming video games, movies or music wrongly shifts responsibility away from the accused and that person's custodians. We seem to live in a society in which people do not accept personal responsibility. The only people benefiting from this sad state are attorneys who are experts at finding others to blame." The parents' attorney, **Jack Thompson**, stated: "We intend to hurt the video games industry."

On a lighter note, **Lara**'s got her kit back on. Following threatened legal action, the notorious **Nude Raider** site has finally been forced to close. A spokesman for **Core Design** whined: "It's been in the back of our minds for a long time now. We didn't like it from a copyright point of view, as well as the fact that children interested in *Tomb Raider* were likely to end up seeing something akin to hard-core pornography." Meanwhile, **Lucozade** have secured **Lara Croft** as the face of their new European TV campaign. The curvaceous adventuress will be seen pursued by a pack of angry dogs.

And if you think games are a waste of money, check out **The *Sunday Times* Rich List**, which posts **Codemasters'** founders **David and Richard Darling** on £40m, equal with Probe Entertainment's **Fergus McGovern**. But they're no more than squalid gypsies compared to the chairman of *PC ZONE*'s publishers, **Felix Dennis,** though, who clocks in at a cool £250m. Ker-ching!

HOTSHOTS

Before diving head first into our comprehensive Previews section, why not feast your eyes on the visual delights of *System Shock 2*, *Braveheart* and *X*

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

⭐ Electronic Arts • Out September

Considering that *System Shock* (PCZ #20, 95%) was easily the best sci-fi RPG ever made, news of a sequel was enough to send the *ZONE* crew into paroxysms of delight, thanks in no small part to the decision by developers Looking Glass to make further use of their Dark (*Thief*) engine. Okay, so it's not the best 3D engine out there, but the fact that it was created just as much for *System Shock 2* as it was for their superb fantasy hack 'em up means that detailed character development and high adventure is as far up the list as its visual treats.

By our reckoning, the two front runners for RPG Of The Year are *Ultima: Ascension* and this. Right now it's too close to call.

BRAVEHEART

⭐ Eidos • Out September

Have you noticed these days that film-licensed games are coming out way after the films themselves? This can only be a good thing though, as is the case with Red Lemon's 3D real-time strategy game *Braveheart*. Taking in-depth resource management from the likes of *Civilization*, and 3D visuals enabling dozens of battling clansmen on-screen at any one time, is no easy task. Add a conflict far more violent than your typical Rangers versus Celtic match, and *Braveheart* is sure to be a hit on both sides of the border.

X – BEYOND THE FRONTIER

⭐ THQ • Out June

It's been far too long since we've had a decent *Elite*-style space combat game, but in *X – Beyond The Frontier*, from German developers Egosoft, we could be looking at the answer to many people's dreams. Featuring over 100 different ships and space stations, and countless planets to trade between, *X* also enables you to build factories and trade convoys as you fight to survive in a politically unstable universe. It's a shame you can only fly the one ship though.

Lock up your daughters, here comes...

DUNGEON KEEPER 2

Prepare to be dragged kicking and screaming into the thrill-packed and enigmatic world of investigative journalism. *Charlie Brooker* **visits Bullfrog in Guildford in search of** *Dungeon Keeper 2*… **right….. about… now!**

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Electronic Arts
PUBLISHER Bullfrog
WEBSITE www.bullfrog.co.uk
OUT July

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's the sequel to *Dungeon Keeper*, and it comes from Bullfrog, who you lot voted Developer of the Year two years running in the *PC ZONE* Awards
- Look at the pictures: it's visually amazing
- Loads of improvements on the original
- Lots of devilish sub-games

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

've got a job to do. I'm here to see *Dungeon Keeper 2*, the follow up to – duhhh – *Dungeon Keeper 1*, one of the most complex and controversial strategy games of all time. Complex because it was an ambitious, sprawling, multi-layered, multi-genre title with unusually elegant gameplay, and controversial because while some people loved it (myself included), others derided it as a repetitive, plodding game with an outdated graphics engine. My job is to find out whether the sequel's going to be any good or not. I leave the station and get into a cab.

INSIDE A BUILDING ON A BUSINESS PARK

Within moments of arriving at Bullfrog's shiny HQ, I'm led to a small, neat conference room and supplied with a mug of instant coffee (a vending machine approximation of cappuccino courtesy of Maxwell House). I take a seat at

the table. An impressively huge (and flat) LCD screen occupies most of the wall in front of me. I blink. My eyes are burning from lack of sleep.

Dungeon Keeper 2 producer Nick Goldsworthy prods a touch-screen panel, the lights in the room start to dim and the screen comes alive. It's like a scene in a Bond movie. Except instead of a map of the world, the screen is filled with the imposing form of *Dungeon Keeper's* horned reaper – or Horny, as they persist in calling him.

I'm being shown an impressive FMV sequence created for the game by a French computer animation company previously responsible for some of the eye-popping 'sky traffic' scenes in *The Fifth Element* (the *movie*, not the *game,* dum-dum). It's good. It cheers me up a little.

Then Goldsworthy fires up the game itself. Twenty minutes later, I realise I've been gawking so hard at the images on the screen I've forgotten all about my ➡

DUNGEON OF CHAT

"Open your heart to me," sang Madonna, once upon a time. Now, many years later, *Dungeon Keeper 2* producer Nick Goldsworthy follows her advice and 'opens his heart' on *Dungeon Keeper 2* to the decidedly less glamorous Charlie Brooker...

For the uninitiated, what sort of game is *Dungeon Keeper*?
Nick: *Keeper* falls in the middle of loads of different genres. It's a *SimCity* game on one level, and at the other end of the scale it's a real-time strategy, *Command & Conquer*-style game. And there's a 3D first-person mode as well.
It's a bit difficult to categorise, then?
Yeah. They have a hard time with it in the US, because they always want to put things in a genre they can easily understand. We have to say to them: "Look, we're somewhere in-between – this is an original game."

Creating a sequel to a game as complex as the original *Keeper* must've been a daunting prospect – where did you begin?
Well, we started off saying let's just update *Keeper* – make it prettier, make it play a bit better – and then within the first three months we realised… well, there's a lot more we can do here. And so it became a true sequel.

In the early stages we had quite a fluffy design document. Then we realised we had to do a proper game mechanics document, so we got five designers in. There are 30

different areas of the project which needed designing – the combat system, the first-person elements and so on – and we split them up so each designer was covering about six sections each. That game mechanics document is like an encyclopedia now. It lists how everything works in relation to everything else.
So it's a huge project. How many people are working on the game?
In total? All in, about 50.
Are they any good?
We've got Sean Cooper, who was the original programmer and designer of *Syndicate,* and he's

"So I say thank you for the music… the songs I'm singing… Thanks for all the joy they're bringing…"

❝You're left with the impression that you're seeing a thriving, organic community, full of life and character, and humour and nastiness❞

It can't be easy walking around in that get-up.

FOCUS POCUS

Bullfrog don't muck around, you know. During the production of *Dungeon Keeper 2* they've been painstakingly examining every aspect of the game to ensure the gaming public will 'get' it all. And you know what that means: that means 'focus grouping'

And lots of it. The help system, for example, was meticulously pieced together during extensive tests on a wide range of players – from jaded testers to virginal office secretaries who'd only ever played *Windows Solitaire* – which helped ascertain just how much 'nudging' the player might require in order to start ascending the learning curve.

Sometimes it takes a long time to get things right. The interface for the game, for example, was redesigned more than ten times following feedback from the focus groups. The end result is an ingenious 'toolbar' system which can be customised in-game to suit the player (frequently used icons can be placed on a special 'favourites' bar that's always within easy reach).

Before you start carping on about things being 'designed by committee', shut up and listen: it's not the entire *concept* that's been focus grouped, just the finer details. Countless games fail because of niggling little irritations which could have been identified during the production process. That's precisely what focus grouping does. So there.

◐ Look at that: completely gratuitous.

The basic gameplay remains the same, but it's all been 'better-fied'.

Is it worth us pointing out how much better than the original this looks?

You can no longer build impenetrable walls – just to make things nice and tense.

leading the design team. There's Alex Peters who's in charge of the programmers – he was a programmer on the original *Dungeon Keeper*. Then there's John Miles who's in charge of the art – he worked on *Privateer II*. There are a lot of talented guys there, a lot of history. It makes for an excellent team.
Agreed. Let's assume I already own *Dungeon Keeper 1*. Give me one reason to buy the sequel.

There are lots of reasons, there's not one main thing in there. It's got an accelerated engine now, and new creatures, new rooms, new types of mission, loads of stuff like that. Then there are all the things which people might think *look* small... the things that balance the game. Balancing is the key, and that's what's actually taken the longest amount of time.
What about the ingrates who didn't like the first game?

There's been some criticism in the past of Bullfrog games in that you play through a few levels and

after that it's all very similar. People said that about *Theme Park* and the original *Keeper*. That's why we've put a story in there.
A story?
Yeah. An ongoing story. It'll drive you on from one mission to the next. You've teamed up with the Horned Reaper, as it were, because he's the only creature powerful enough to aid you in your quest. And while that's going on there are sub-quests as well.

There's lots of different types of mission this time. It's not all 'build from scratch'. There's ones where you take over an existing dungeon and try to upgrade it. There are puzzle levels as well. And there's My Pet Dungeon.

My Pet Dungeon? What's that?
It's sort of a *Theme Dungeon* mode. You just build up your dungeon, *SimCity*-style, without any combat – unless you want it.
Ooh. Any other big changes we should know about?
Yes. Another biggie is the combat system. In the first game you could just pick up lots of creatures, drop them on to one spot and they'd have a mass battle. It was all a game of numbers, really. You'd just be sitting there with a heal spell and a lightning spell, trying to influence the fight that way. And it looked a mess. You couldn't really see what was going on.

Now, when you drop them, they have their own mass – and

Money plays as big a role as ever in the sequel.

Here comes trouble: a dark angel enters the dungeon.

Hapless intruders are likely to end up behind bars – your bars.
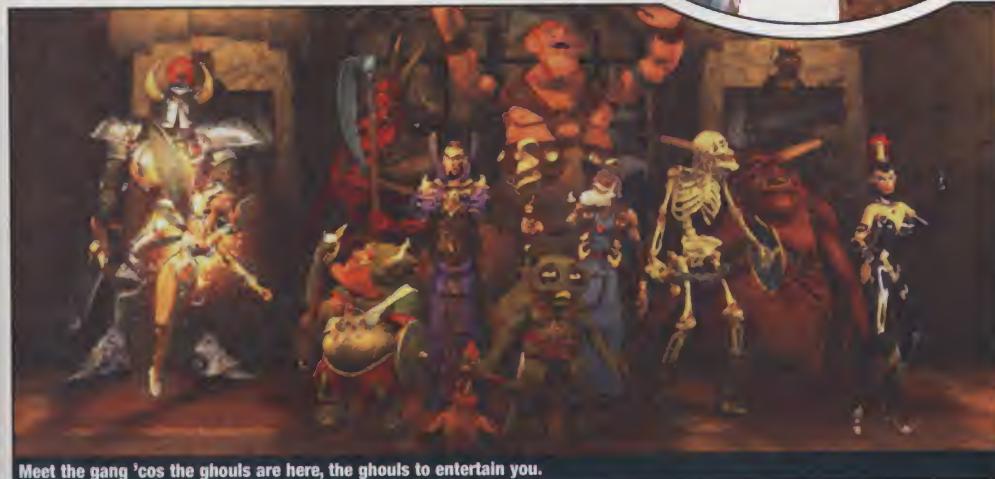
Meet the gang 'cos the ghouls are here, the ghouls to entertain you.

coffee, which is now stone cold. I've been gawking so hard because *Dungeon Keeper 2* looks *fantastic*.

GOBLINS DANCE BEFORE ME

The main difference, the first thing that hits you, is how much better the creatures look now that they've been upgraded from pre-rendered sprites to polygonal models. It isn't just that they now sit more comfortably with their 3D surroundings, they also benefit from lighting effects, they cast shadows, and they display *far* smoother animation than before.

Everything looks crisper, clearer, and faintly more disgusting. Even the dungeon heart, the source of all your power, looks like a 'proper' organ. You feel you could reach into the screen, poke it, and get an eyeful of goo spurted back at you in return. Lovely.

Nick loads up a thriving dungeon and starts to demonstrate some of the other new features. He drops a troll into a casino room. It starts gambling. He drops a pair of monsters into a combat pit and they start leathering one another. As the fight progresses, a crowd of onlookers begins to gather – other creatures, hearing the commotion, have come to have a look.

An enemy – a hero – wanders into the dungeon and is spotted by an imp, which

> ## 66 I've been gawking so hard because *Dungeon Keeper 2* looks *fantastic* 99

becomes visibly startled. It scuttles away. We follow it down a corridor. The imp runs into another room and raises a crowd of tougher beasts. They storm away in the direction of the hero, thirsty for battle.

First-person mode next. Nick possesses a firefly and starts to buzz around. The screen splits into a honeycomb viewpoint – flies have compound eyes, after all. As a fly, he's got nasty

they get stunned by the fall. Especially larger creatures, like the Bile Demon. If you drop *him*, he'll lie there unable to move for a while, during which time he'll be taking double damage. If you just rain a lot of them down, they'll get annihilated; you have to be more strategic.

Fair enough. What about the fighting itself?
Well, we wanted to make the combat a key component of the game. Each creature's got a certain fighting technique. Some creatures try to outflank others, some, like the bile demons, will move to the front and try to block. Warlocks stand at the back casting spells. As they go up through the levels, they gain new

skills and abilities. So, during a battle, a level 3 warlock might spot a weak creature and cast a spell to heal it, for example. There's a certain amount of intelligence in there, and you can see it all in action. But you still need to take control; you can't just sit back and leave them to it.

Speaking of which, how has the first-person mode changed?
Well, first of all, with the new engine, everything looks a *lot* better.

We wanted to improve first-person and make it a more important part of the game. Now, when you possess a creature, you'll actually be slightly more efficient in battle.

You'll cause more damage.

A lot of the creatures have individual skills in first-person mode

that they don't have in third-person. For instance, if you possess a bile demon, you can use him to pick up imps and throw them across chasms. It's quite a gimmicky thing, but it does help if, for example, you wanted to get the imp across some lava or something.

Anything else?
Well, there *are* other things specific to first-person mode. You've got a sniper mode for your elven guys, and the vampire's got a sort of 'hypnotic stare' which lets him turn enemy creatures on to his side. Also, you can create 'war parties': any creatures you're facing, you can just 'tag' them and they'll follow you, as a group. It saves you having to switch in

and out of first-person mode all the time. You don't *need* to enter first-person to win a level, but it does offer distinct advantages in some cases, especially in multiplayer.

Are you worried the whole 'dungeons and orcs' shtick might put some people off?
I think some people perceived the original *Keeper* as a role-playing game, which of course it wasn't. The creatures gain experience points, but that's about as close as it gets to an RPG. In some areas of the world, that perception works quite well – people really like the Dungeons & Dragons scenario – but for the UK we're trying to get away from that a little. You'll see that from the

little teeth; he chomps at a passing chicken to prove how well they work. Meanwhile, countless other beasts are wandering around, going about their business. A set of imps are busy tunnelling through a section of nearby rock. A Bile Demon drags himself by with a nonchalant grunt. It's all quite captivating.

You're left with the impression that you're seeing a thriving, organic community, full of life and character, and humour and nastiness. This was always one of the aims of the original game, but there's something about the crisp, polygonal focus of the sequel that makes the overall vision leap vividly to life. Sitting by and looking on is frustrating; you can't *wait* to roll your sleeves up and get stuck in yourself.

SCREEN: OFF

With the demonstration over, it's time for the interview – which you can read along the bottom of these pages – to begin. Goldsworthy is refreshingly free from hyperbole – one of the first things he picks out as a major development in the game is the sheer amount of fine-tuning and balancing that's gone on. Incredibly important from a gameplay point of view, but hardly the stuff of screaming advertising slogans. He comes across as a relaxed, attentive kind of guy. Probably nice to work for. The only awkward moment occurs when, suffering from cheap coffee and psychotic exhaustion, I inexplicably ask him what kind of animal he'd most like to have sex with. We ask everybody that question, I lie. There's a long, slightly embarrassed pause before he admits defeat: he can't think of one. I apologise and change the subject.

Overall there's a lot of talk about the game, obviously, and it's clearly something he's been talking about a lot of late. He brightens visibly when asked about his first gaming experiences. Turns out he's got a collection of old gaming systems at home. He knows his stuff. It's a passion.

That isn't something you can fake. This won't be a fake; this game won't be a token remake of the original. *Dungeon Keeper 2* will, we believe, rock bells. **PCZ**
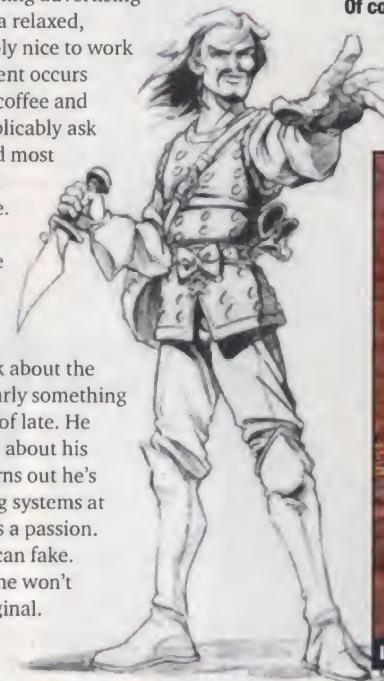
CHANGING ROOMS

In the original *Dungeon Keeper* there were loads of different kinds of rooms you could build within your dungeon, each of which served a specific purpose. Libraries, for instance, were knowledge centres wherein creatures could teach themselves new spells, while chicken hatcheries served as handy sources of food. All the rooms from the original are retained for the sequel, with a couple of fun additions.

First of all there's a 'barbarian pit' room where creatures learn to fight. It works quite simply: just drop a pair of creatures in and watch as they hammer ten shades of shinola out of one another. They even draw a baying crowd. When close to death, they limp away and recuperate – unless you drop them in with a captured hero, in which case you've got a fight to the death. Oh, the humanity.

Then there's the Casino room, replete with fruit machines and roulette wheels. This works on two levels: it attracts monsters into the dungeon, keeps them entertained, and can actually save you money (the ignorant sods keep pumping their wages into it).

Of course, once in a while, someone will hit the jackpot and you have to pay out, probably when you're in a tight fiscal spot already. Still, in true casino-owning-bastard tradition, you can always beat the crap out of the winner and recoup some of your losses as he drops the coins. Just don't let the other creatures spot you or they'll riot.

I'm bored with this, where's the bingo hall?

Looks like anorexia is in this year.

---

marketing campaign. For example, the actual look of the box this time is quite radically different. There'll be quite a lot of humour as well. Not *too* much humour, that side of things won't be completely in-your-face.
You won't be hiring the Chuckle Brothers, then?
God no.
That reminds us: how do you feel about all the torture in the game?
The torture? I love it. That's my favourite – watching the mistress get tortured. She enjoys it. Actually, all the creatures

make different sounds for different types for torture. We've had loads of voice actors in.
Voice actors? How the hell do you audition them?
Well, we send them a description of the creature, a few pictures, some reference materials… and then they send a tape back saying "this is my interpretation of the Reaper", or whatever. Some of them work really well. The salamander's really good. We've got a Shakespearean actor doing the main voice. The

Mistress was done by this really short lass – she was only about five foot high – who had this really sexy voice. We had one guy in who'd done the *Super Noodles* advert – the one where they lick the plates. He's Scottish. He's done the giant and the dwarf. It's a diverse range.

There are about 30 different things the creatures say – well, they don't *speak*, it's more vocal gestures. They make sad sounds, happy sounds, sulking sounds, angry sounds… they grunt when they pass each other in a corridor. And you have to get the voice actor to do about five examples of each of these. When you've got a voice actor trying to do a sulking firefly it gets a bit… strange.

Indeed. Does working as a producer on a major project like this leave you with any free time at all?
No. Never does. And I've been in the games industry for ten years

people saying "I need this!" and "I need that!"

There's this sense of constantly catching up with things, always a sense of urgency. I've lost most of my hair through

> ❝When you've got a voice actor trying to do a sulking firefly it gets a bit… strange❞
> NICK GOLDSWORTHY, *DUNGEON KEEPER* PRODUCER

now. It sounds like an easy life, but one of the main problems is flying round the world to show people the game. I was in Germany last week, I'm off to Vancouver on Wednesday… Just so people get to see the game – members of the press, and internal EA people. And then I'll get back and find 500 emails from

bloody stress. And my computer blew up this morning, which is a pain.
Is it a rubbish job, then?
No. There are certain times which are great. Once *Keeper 2* is finished, we'll have almost a year of working on a new game concept, in a small team of four or five, bouncing ideas off each

The visuals really benefit from the use of fancy-pants lighting effects.
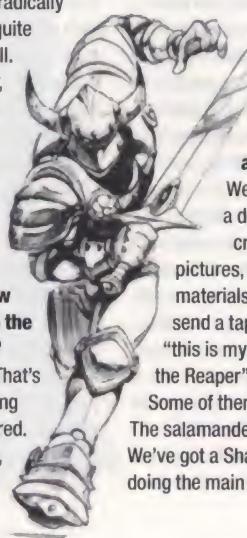
He'll have someone's eye out with that.

Look closely and you can see that the polygon count for each creature is deceptively low.

I'M SO HORNY, HORNY HORNY HORNY

The Horned Reaper from the original *Keeper* proved so popular that his role has been substantially increased for the sequel. He's now actually working in conjunction with the Keeper himself (that's *you*, that is), so you'll be seeing a lot more of him.

Just as well his behaviour has been given something of a tweak, then. He's been invested with more character than before, and reacts to other creatures around him accordingly – throwing scowling glances at cowering imps, that sort of thing. Nice.

I knew a guy who got a nasty rash round his ring.

The Horned Reaper: drwn with one of those "computer pen things".

---

other. That's one of the best things. That and the end of a project. It's a lot of stress, but once it's done and you read the reviews, or go into a shop and see it on the shelves, you think "Yeah, *cool*". That's very rewarding.

But given the amount of stress involved, the complexity of the project, and the size of the team, are there ever any huge, violent rows where people hurl chairs at one another?
You get a few stormy sessions. You get people shouting from their desks and stuff. Nothing ever lasts though. People get heated, then come back a couple of hours later and shake hands. The artists and the programmers

get on really well on this project, which historically isn't always the case. There's been a really good relationship on this, and it's the first time I've seen that work really well.

What do you reckon Peter Molyneux's going to make of the game?
Everyone's been asking me that. I think he'll think it's great.

What was the first game you ever played?
A version of *Donkey Kong* on the Commodore Pet. I was in the first year of computer studies at school. They were teaching us the history of Boolean algebra and that sort of thing. There was this Pet there, and we used to stay behind just to play *Donkey Kong*.

That and *Space Panic*.

What about your first computer? What was that?
The first machine I owned was a Vic 20 with no cassette unit. Me and my brother used to type games in, line by line, from a book. And we didn't have a *clue* about programming at the time, so if you got one comma out of place you had to go back and read through the *entire* listing to see where you'd gone wrong.

And then once you'd typed one in and got it working, you'd leave it on as long as possible because you couldn't save it. We'd go and play out in the woods or whatever, and while we were away mum would come in to do the hoovering and switch it off.

At school some of the senior guys got in a BBC Micro, and they had *Elite*. I remember looking over their shoulders at it, thinking "Bloody hell!" I was *scared* of playing it. It had these entire *worlds* in it… I was quite happy just watching *them* play. That was the first game to make a really big impression on me.

You're a producer, managing a large team working on a tricky project. Rather like the dungeon keeper himself, really. Have you picked up any management techniques from the game?
What, like slapping people?

Maybe now I've got a slightly more direct approach. I flick the back of people's ears and things.
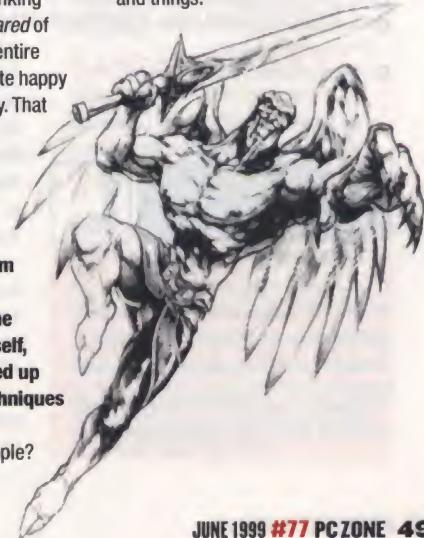
Prepare for the gaming event of the decade
STAR WARS: EPISODE 1
THE PHANTOM MENACE

A new *Star Wars* movie!
And a game based on it!
Jeremy Wells has been
waiting for this moment since
he was seven years old

More outlandish robot designs from those talented folks at LucasFilms.
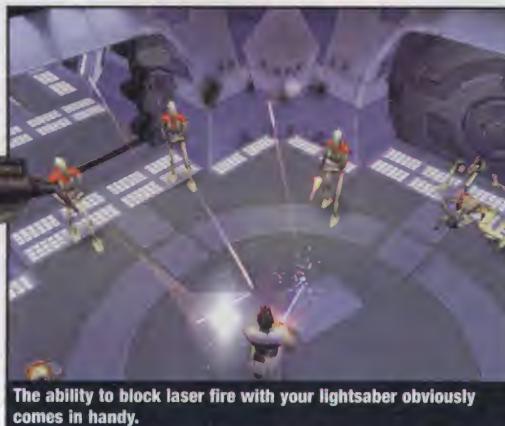
The ability to block laser fire with your lightsaber obviously comes in handy.

Queen Amidala converses with her shiny-helmeted friend. And on the floor in the backgound? Don't ask.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER LucasArts/Big Ape
PUBLISHER Activision
WEBSITE www.lucasarts.com
OUT June

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Er… It's *Star Wars*
- You get to play as four different characters from the new movie
- You get to wield a lightsaber and use the Force
- This is shaping up to be one of the biggest games of the year/decade/ever
- It's from LucasArts. Need we say more?

CV

LUCASARTS

Far too many games to mention here, but pretty much every *Star Wars* game ever made has come from the LucasArts stable

We always hoped it was true, but we never dared believe the rumours. Way back in 1997, while visiting the LucasArts HQ just outside San Francisco, California, *PC ZONE* heard that a number of people at LucasArts were working on two top-secret projects that would be ready for a simultaneous release with the first (then unnamed) Episode 1 movie.

Last month LucasArts announced that *The Phantom Menace* and *Episode 1 Racer* would be released at the end of May/June, and the whole world almost wet itself with excitement. While *Episode 1 Racer* does indeed look pretty special (see Bulletin page 23), the game that's getting *Star Wars* fans most moist in the trouser department is the one that follows the plot and shares the name of the forthcoming movie.

USE THE FORCE

Unlike *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II™* (*PCZ #55, 94%*), where you assumed the role of a certain Kyle Katarn, in *The Phantom Menace* you get to play four different characters (see panel opposite) who actually feature in the movie, changing roles at various points when the storyline demands.

For the majority of the game you control one of the two Jedi: Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson) and Obi Wan Kenobi (Ewan MacGregor). The action is *Tomb Raider*-style, top-down 3D with a CPU-controlled

The young Obi Wan in all his polygonal splendour.

As a Jedi Knight you have a number of tricks up your sleeve, such as the 'Force Push'.

The Phantom Menace will be largely action-oriented.

The characters can run, jump, climb, swim and duck, as well as fight.

Qui-Gon Jinn is obviously something of a ladies' man.

Panoka (left) and some geezer with silly ears.

Familiar characters you meet include C-3PO, R2-D2 and Anakin Skywalker.

Obviously LucasArts will be including every ship from the new film.

camera that moves capably to frame the action. Just like Lara, you can run, jump, swim, climb and fight – just as you could in *Dark Forces II*. Similarly, a number of more sophisticated manoeuvres can be pulled off, along with certain special 'Force' moves such as the Force Push. One particularly smart feature is the ability to block laser fire with your lightsaber, a relatively simple yet effective manoeuvre that you can't help but gasp at when you first see it.

LIVE THE MOVIE
As the title suggests, the game faithfully follows the movie in terms of plot, character and location. You start off as Obi Wan Kenobi alongside your mentor Qui-Gon Jinn, aboard a Trade Federation battleship above the planet Naboo. As the game progresses, you get the opportunity to explore various locations on, around and beneath the planet, as well as the remote deserts of Tatooine and the densely populated capital Coruscant. The game is full of a variety of NPCs that are featured in the

movie, including Anakin Skywalker, Yoda, C-3PO, R2-D2 and Jabba the Hutt. Seamless in-engine cinematics help to keep you thoroughly absorbed, while occasional dialogue with the key characters ensures that you're always informed as to the state of affairs.

Although *The Phantom Menace* is very much an action/adventure game, it's not move-and-fire, hack-and-slash. There are a number of one-on-one confrontations with major characters, but not all the levels require you to fight your way out of trouble. One set piece, for example, requires you (as Captain Panaka) to safely escort the Queen through the gigantic city of Espa while being chased across rooftops by a myriad of baddies.

BELIEVE THE HYPE
The Phantom Menace is undoubtedly a *Star Wars* fan's wet dream come true. Exquisite visuals coupled with an engaging and progressive storyline make it a potential candidate for Game Of The Decade. Hopefully it will live up to the hype.

> **"Seamless cinematics help to keep you thoroughly absorbed, while occasional dialogue ensures that you're always informed as to the state of affairs"**

THIS GAME'S GOT CHARACTER(S)

Unlike most action adventure games we've seen to date, in *The Phantom Menace* you get to play four different characters, each with their own particular strengths and weaknesses

QUI-GON JINN
(Played in the movie by Liam Neeson) A Jedi Knight and all-round top geezer, he's just the kind of bloke you need when the going gets tough and you need to get going.

OBI WAN KENOBI
(Played in the movie by Ewan MacGregor) If you don't know who this is then you may as well just turn the page. You obviously have no healthy interest in *Star Wars*, and think that Chewbacca is what cowboys do.

CAPTAIN PANAKA
(Played in the movie by Hugh Quarshie) A new character who no one knows much about apart from George Lucas and Hugh Quarshie.

QUEEN AMIDALA
(Played in the movie by Natalie Portman – you know, the jailbait in the critically acclaimed assassin flick *Leon*) Okay, so she's a girl and has an odd fashion sense, but she's integral to the plot and requires you to change your hack-and-slash attitude to one of stealth and cunning.

Beware of whiplash, it's...

BREAKNECK

Some kind of bizarre monster truck hybrid. It'll never catch on.

A racing car versus a saloon car. Interesting.

Each car can be sponsored by a particular company, in this case it's glue. Not recommended for driving.

He's never actually broken his neck, although he has shattered both arms. And *Steve Hill* still hasn't learned how to drive

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Synetic
PUBLISHER THQ
WEBSITE www.thq.com
OUT June 1999

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- 24 different tracks
- 44 different vehicles
- Several racing types
- Elaborate career mode

SYNETIC

Synetic (tag: The Funfactory) are a German development team located in Guetersloh. They made these...

1997 *Have A Nice Day*, a racing game, kicks things off.

1997 *Have a Nice Day Trackpack* is a trackpack for *Have A Nice Day*.

1997 *aXelerator* (PCZ #52, 52%) is the international version of *Have A Nice Day*.

1998 *N.I.C.E. 2* is the sequel to *aXelerator* and, barring a few tweaks, is to all intents and purposes the game that will be released over here as *Breakneck*.

E stablishing a whole new genre, *Breakneck* has you, the hapless player, pursuing heavily sedated farmyard animals and then attempting to snap their lazy necks with your bare hands. Of course it doesn't. It's a racing game. At which point it is traditional – if not compulsory – to point out that the PC has more racing games than a madman has bewildering visions. There are absolutely shedloads of them, and scientists have actually proved that if every PC racing game was laid from end to end they would stretch from

ZONE's office all the way down to the second-hand games shop in Tottenham Court Road, which is where a sizeable proportion of them inevitably end up.

It's not that all racing games are rubbish. Far from it, in fact – the majority are excellent, it's just that there's often very little to keep you coming back for more. After a couple of days' play you've seen all the tracks, you've driven all the cars, and

it's all too tempting to put the game back in the box and shamefacedly hand it over to a shop assistant in exchange for a measly 12 pounds, which you are then free to spend on anything of your choosing, be it strong liquor, a week's worth of Pukka pies or a selection of mucky books, all of which will probably hold your attention for longer than the average racing game.

GERMAN

So how is *Breakneck* going to register any more than a blip on the Richter scale of racing games? It's probably best if we ask someone who knows something about it. Marc Braun (no relation to Eva) is the International Producer, and he reckons it will stand out "because it has a more fluid 3D engine, especially on slower PCs. And because it has so many different game modes, it doesn't get boring."

> **If you've ever felt the need to murder other motorists, *Breakneck* will cater for this extreme form of road rage in explosive fashion**

Indeed it does (have different modes, that is). For the purist, the standard race mode simply involves tearing round a track and attempting to reach the finish line before anyone else. No surprises there. However, the so-called Fox Hunt is a different bag altogether, whereby one driver is given a ten-second head start and, like camp comedian Duncan Norvelle, invites the other contestants to "chase

That man has no dignity.

Is that manly enough, do you think?

Some vegetarian-mobiles can reach up to 40mph.

What is this? *Ghostbusters*?

Sticking to the road is usually a more effective game plan.

me". You can assume the role of either the hunter or the hunted, with points allotted according to how long you can remain in front.

And there's more... If you've ever felt the need to murder other motorists, *Breakneck* caters for this extreme form of road rage in explosive fashion, the DeathMatch mode enabling you to load up on guns and kill your friends or, for the solo player, computer-generated opponents. The weapons are many and varied, encompassing old-fashioned tricks such as dropping oil or nails on to the track, as well as more incendiary efforts in the form of grenades, mines and homing missiles.

MONSTER MONSTER

The array of vehicles is also vast, ranging from generic sports cars to monster trucks, superkarts and even 2CVs. But why would someone want to drive what is effectively an upside-down pram instead of a high-performance babe magnet? Marc?

"Because some people think it's funny. These kind of cars aren't usually seen in this genre, so if some people want to go for a network game with 2CVs, with *Breakneck* they can."

Aren't monster trucks the preserve of White Trash Americans? What place do they have in this game?

"They are special cars. The monster trucks in *Breakneck* are different from the US ones. Here you still have to drive, and the idea is to finish the race, not to drive over other cars."

What's the best part of *Breakneck* – the racing, or the shooting?

"It depends what you prefer. If you like plain racing, you can do that. If you're more into shooting things there's a mode that uses weapons."

Is *Breakneck* perhaps trying to be all things to all people? Wouldn't it have been better to simply concentrate on one aspect?

"No. We just have a lot of different game modes, so everybody can decide what they like most. If all you want is a fast race with guns blasting, fine. But if you prefer to drive a whole championship with more 'real' cars, you can do that as well."

He's right, you can, and the game will incorporate an elaborate career mode whereby you travel the world competing in races for money, which can then be blown on car improvements or even more cars.

We've been playing a fairly complete version for a couple of days, and apart from the incredibly ill-conceived interface (which we've been assured is being changed) it looks a lot of fun. The press release says it's "the best speed money can buy". Whether *Breakneck* will also have you grinding your teeth, gibbering mindlessly and staring into space pondering the worthlessness of your existence remains to be seen, but we'll certainly be having a dab when it comes in for review. **PCZ**

Breakneck's explosive DeathMatch mode in full effect.

Send for the...

INFANTRY

Ten bucks a month puts you on the tactical bus to team heaven. *Phil Wand* hitches a ride

Intruder alert! Everyone scrambles as invaders dash into your base.

No, it isn't your imagination, online games look just as good as anything else.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Online tactical combat universe
- 150+ players per game arena
- Hard-core team features, over 200 weapons
- $10 a month (to be confirmed)

⚠ **Tanks will never be able to hover.**

Since word got out that *Infantry* was deep into development, gamers have been working themselves into a frenzy. Even back in November, mail servers were filling up with a deluge of questions. What did it look like? When would they see it? Am I in love?

Today the forums section of the *Infantry* website holds close to a thousand messages – and nobody's actually played the game yet. I mean, *honestly*. You could be forgiven for thinking it was *Quake IV*.

All this hullabaloo stems from the fact that British-born Rod Humble, the guy heading up Harmless Games and the *Infantry* project, is the man behind one of the most successful online games to date: Virgin Interactive's spectacularly addictive *SubSpace*. At its height, *SubSpace* boasted a user base of over 150,000 gamers, countless fan sites and its own suite of newsgroups. So everyone knew Mr Humble could deliver.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Infantry is a science fiction tactical combat game played exclusively over the Internet. The action is set in the year 2200, when a vast empire known as The Collective has spread from Earth to the far reaches of the solar system. The empire is crumbling though, with civil unrest developing into full-scale planetary war – and you're stuck in the middle of it all.

The game looks like a hybrid of *FireTeam*, *SubSpace* and *Total Annihilation*. Says Rod: "I make no bones about the fact that *Infantry* was inspired by our last game, *SubSpace*. As for similarities to *FireTeam*, we were working on our code long before its release. It's a different kind of game anyway."

More than 150 players can fill the *Infantry* arenas, and with each arena linked to others by portals, the total play area is immense. The special effects line-up is everything you'd expect from a modern game, and includes all the latest tricks, treats and eye candy.

"But it's not just about cramming hundreds of people onto our servers and wowing them with graphics," comments Rod. "We've spent a great deal of time and effort making it feel as fun as possible, because a huge range of opponents and designer backdrops means nothing if the gameplay sends you to sleep."

At its heart, *Infantry* is an RPG. There are hundreds of skills for people to develop, ranging from medical expertise and heavy weapons proficiency to undercover work and demolition. To accompany this huge scope of abilities there's also a huge range of weapons: lasers, carbines, shotguns, grenades, phosphorus grenades, anti-tank rockets, flame-throwers, artillery, sonic weapons, static emplacement guns, bunkers and a whole lot more. And because you're playing in a constantly evolving universe, the range can only get bigger.

The Infantry universe looks like a slicker version of *Total Annihilation*.

Some of the screens show the interface is still in development.

Like any team game, *Infantry* is reliant on high levels of player co-operation.

Information screens give you a comprehensive overview of your character, together with his/her abilities.

CV

HARMLESS GAMES

Rod Humble and Jeff Petersen, the two key people behind *SubSpace*, wanted to break away from Virgin Interactive and 'do their own thing'. Harmless Games is the result

1999 *Infantry* is due to be released "some time in the summer". It's online only, but so what? Games such as *Ultima Online* captivate thousands (and *UO* is Electronic Arts' most profitable game ever). The Internet represents a massive growth area for the games industry – never, ever dismiss it.

Q&A

ROD HUMBLE

They guy behind Virgin's Interactive's acclaimed SubSpace, Rod is CEO of Harmless Games and is the world's biggest Outlaws fan. Ahem

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?

ROD *Atom Invaders* on the Acorn Atom. I remember buying Acorn's 12Kb RAM expansion which was needed to play the game.

PCZ What's your favourite game of all time?

ROD My rule of thumb is to go by the amount of time I spend with a game. In that regard the prize goes to *Alternate Reality* on my old Atari 400. Mind you, I think I wasted ages playing it, because I had to change the floppy disk every three minutes.

PCZ What are you playing at the moment?

ROD Currently, I'm bashing away at *Civilization: Call To Power* and *Steel Panthers III*. I'm still playing *Half-Life*, but like everyone else, I got bored with the 'alien' levels. Oh, and *EverQuest*.

PCZ What's the last game you paid money for?

ROD *WWII GI*. I was hoping for another *Outlaws*.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight, and if so what happened?

ROD Never, although I've been *near* loads. When I lived in Miami, my friend and I were out on the town when a car came flying around the corner. My friend threw a peppermint – which later transpired to be a bottle – and two guys bailed out. My friend was pounded by the more irate of the pair, and the other guy moved towards me. I looked at him and he looked at me, then we both just looked at our mates kicking the crap out of each other, sat on the kerb and started smoking until they were done.

Infantry players can also take advantage of psionics (a sort of magical power of the mind), and special abilities include clairvoyance (the ability to sense life), telekinesis (moving objects using mental power) and pyrokinesis (a sort of mental Molotov cocktail).

Like its rivals, the online *Infantry*

> **We never argue about not doing something because it will throw us off schedule. If it sounds cool, we run with it and worry about the timetable later**

world is persistent, meaning that time passes and events are triggered regardless of the number of players present in the game. As the world doesn't stop turning the moment you go to sleep, so the *Infantry* server processes information while you're disconnected.

Rod continues: "The software engine itself is dynamic, meaning it's able to create new levels on the fly and adapt rapidly to different styles of play. It can become a simple action game, or a very complex tactical game. That sort of instant flexibility means it should appeal to everyone."

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

With titles like *Team Fortress Classic* and *Starsiege Tribes*, they create the feeling of a close-knit crew. When you join in, you have to know who you're working for, what your orders are and what the bad guys look like. And when your guys win there's a big buzz. Unlike 'regular' deathmatch, the team-play in these titles is a better reflection of the real world and can be a lot more challenging.

To boost the team-play theme in *Infantry* special skills enable certain players to take charge where others can't. Some enable you to pilot multi-seater transports (if you've played *Tribes* you know what fun it is to fly four-up with heavily armed buddies). A large battle tank, for example, needs a minimum of five skill sets to function properly: a commander, gunner, hull gunner, technical officer and driver. Team up, grab some passengers and away you go.

You can also set up special communications channels to send and store messages to fellow squad members. These get delivered next time they're online, a bit like a cross between *ICQ* and email.

WHEN, WHEN, WHEN?

Rod is hoping for a beta prior to final release in the summer. "Nick, the big boss at Brainscan, is the one pushing hardest for public testing," he says. "Trouble is, it's not as simple as it sounds. We're still developing core areas of the code. We had a few problems back in March when we changed the data file format, and the whole thing got screwed. I was busy putting the pieces back together for a week."

Whatever happens, you can rest assured that everyone's working hard on polishing every aspect of the game. And they discuss everything. "There are always

arguments," says Rod, "but almost all are to do with quality. We never argue about not doing something because it will throw us off schedule. If it sounds cool, we run with it and worry about the timetable later. Our players are, as ever, our fiercest critics, so once we start expanding our tester base, the design of the game will be down to what they want." Harmless have the right recipe to create an astonishing online game – they've done it all before – so *Infantry* should be worth the wait. PCZ

Start building, it's...
STREET WARS:
CONSTRUCTOR UNDERWORLD

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's the sequel to the *PC ZONE* Classic, *Constructor*)
- Gangster period setting
- Packed with dark humour
- Intuitive interface

A game in which you can "have some fun while getting your butt kicked"? *Steve Hill* **bends over and laughs**

> We really believe we've got the mix right in the game: solid gameplay, an intuitive control system, and good play progression
>
> TIM BEST, DESIGNER ON *CONSTRUCTOR 2*

Burning your enemies beyond recognition is a viable strategy.

Different gangs are identified by colour. Here, the Greens mark their territory.

Gangsters: now there's a decent idea for a game. *Gangsters* (PCZ #71, 58%): a game that didn't quite live up to expectations.

However, after much chin-stroking, Studio 3 decided to set *Street Wars* in very similar surroundings, namely 1930s America, a period of prohibition, brutal extortion and extravagant trousers. Of course, 'borrowed ideas' are nothing new in the games industry, where plagiarism is rife and an original idea sticks out like a sore thumb. Nevertheless, Studio 3 are adamant that they didn't break into someone's house and steal the idea for *Gangsters*, although they do admit to having played the Eidos game.

"Yeah, we play a lot of games," explains Tim Best, a member of the design team dubbed The Consiglieres (Mafia counsellors).

"We like to think that we are very aware of what is out there. We particularly like real-time strategy games. Even the occasional turn-based ones like *Civilization* slips into our 'must play' list.

"*Gangsters* was okay. It came out quite a long time after the design work for *Street Wars* was done. We think we have the edge on playability, and we have a secret weapon in *Street Wars* – dark humour."

HA HA HA

Comedy also played an important part in the excellent *Constructor*, which was effectively a White Trash simulator, involving genetic engineering in a very English setting. The underworld of prohibition era America is far removed from the Terry and June world of the original, so how did they settle on the gangster setting?

"A lot of themes have been designed for the *Constructor* engine, like '50s 'B' movie science fiction, the Home Guard during the blitz in the Second World War, the period of the Black Death and a few others we can't talk about at the moment. When we showed the ideas to everyone they all felt the gangster era scenario was best to showcase the enormous changes that had been made to the *Constructor* engine."

What's so good about it?

"We really believe we've got the mix right in the game: solid gameplay, an intuitive control system, and good play progression through a series of missions. The other important thing is that we haven't taken things too seriously – there's more than a liberal sprinkling of humour throughout the game. Just wait till you hear the radio broadcasts when you complete all the missions and you'll see what we mean."

We've had a dabble with an early version of the game, and we have to concede that it is vaguely amusing –

A bit of whoring provides some welcome relief.

"We have tried very hard not to take ourselves too seriously, and to let the player have some fun while his butt is being kicked"
TIM BEST, DESIGNER ON *CONSTRUCTOR 2*

Gangsters are obviously very religious people.

Q&A
TIM BEST

Tim Best, designer on Street Wars: Constructor Underworld, *acts as mouthpiece for The Consiglieres*

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?
TIM As the design team have been in the industry for more years than we usually own up to, none of us can remember back that far. A list of memorable games from when we started would have to include things like *Jet Set Willy*, *Knight Lore*, *Arcadia*, *MULE.*, *Miner 2049er*, and lots of other great games that been consigned to the mists of time.
PCZ What would you say is the best game you've ever played?
TIM The one we are currently working on. Apart from that, the general consensus among The Consiglieres is that *Zelda 64* takes some beating.
PCZ What's the last game you paid money for?
TIM *Rollercoaster Tycoon*
PCZ Have you ever been in a fight, and if so what happened?
TIM The *Street Wars* design team are constantly fighting each other – that's how great games are created. I was in a life-and-death struggle the other day with a seven-year-old boy (my son) who repeatedly beat the crap out of me in *Tekken 3* – good job I don't like fighting games (well that's my excuse).

CV
STUDIO 3
They used to be called System 3, and they've made shedloads of games on various platforms. Here are a few of their most significant releases...

1984 *Deathstar Interceptor.* System 3's first game. Cover art ripped off *Star Wars* – and they got away with it.

1986 *International Karate.* Multi-format benchmark beat 'em up.

1987 *The Last Ninja.* The most successful original game ever on the Commodore 64

1988 *Last Ninja 2.* Sold over a million units worldwide.

1988 *Bangkok Knights.* Featured the largest animated characters ever seen in a fighting game.

1989 *IK Plus.* An Archer Maclean classic. According to Capcom themselves it was the inspiration for *Street Fighter 2*.

1989 *Vendetta.* An arcade adventure set in a 3D isometric world. Used the *Last Ninja* engine.

1990 *Myth.* Critically acclaimed action platform game.

1991 *Last Ninja 3.* Your Commodore magazine gave this a review score of 100 per cent. The idiots.

1997 *Constructor* (PCZ #55, 92%). The predecessor to *Street Wars.*

Land must be bought before building work starts. And that costs money.

Strip joints are part and parcel of gangster life. Bring out the gimp.

Welcome to Hickstown, USA. Squeal, piggy!

Hilarious video footage informs you of major events.

as in 'computer game funny', still a world away from real comedy. The humour takes the form of stereotyped characters, overacted voices, and of course the staple of any game attempting comedy – the funny name. Wilfred Septic, anyone? Barney Porkhead? Nurse, my sides...

PLAYAWAY
The playability is certainly shaping up though, and even having the game crash after two hours was considerably more enjoyable than ploughing through the ponderous *Gangsters* again. For anyone who played *Constructor* (PCZ #55, 92%), the interface should be familiar, and even for a

newcomer it seems fairly intuitive.
The graphics are similar to those in the first game, Studio 3 sticking with bitmaps as opposed to full 3D. Tim explains the thinking behind this: "The main reason is that we wanted to keep the sharp-edged look of bitmap graphics for the game, and also to make the game compatible with as broad a range of machines as possible. Creating a 3D environment just because it's trendy doesn't

necessarily add anything to a game. We did look into the possibility of having a 3D environment right at the beginning, but felt that it doesn't show off the quirky nature of our graphics well enough – yet. Maybe next time, you'll have to wait and see!"
Good graphics are generally taken for granted these days, but a strategy game lives or dies on the strength of its AI, and that's something Tim is confident about.
"It works. The computer-moderated opponents are really well balanced and often exhibit – sometimes frighteningly so – very 'human player' actions and reactions. We've spent a lot of time on the AI and, as game

players ourselves, we're very happy with the end result."
The AI may well be very realistic, but *Street Wars* is by no means a documentary. How similar to real life do you think it is?
"I think that if organised crime had been modelled on our ideas, then most of the gangsters would have ended up as bad music-hall comedians rather than feared killers and extorters. There are a lot of elements in the game that have been taken from real life – if you can call Hollywood gangster movies real life – but we have tried very hard not to take ourselves too seriously, and to let the player have some fun while his butt is being kicked."

They seem like three nice blokes.
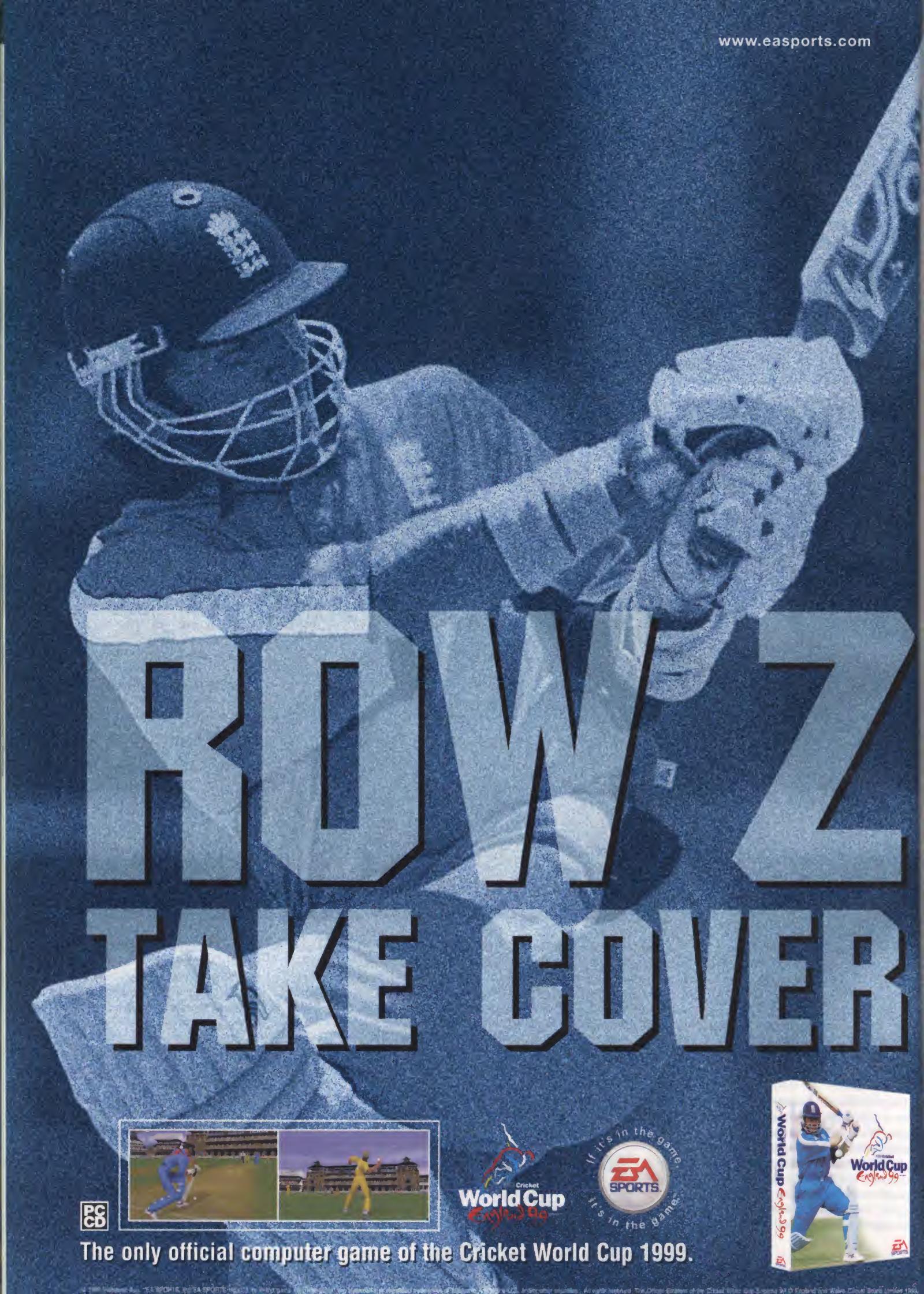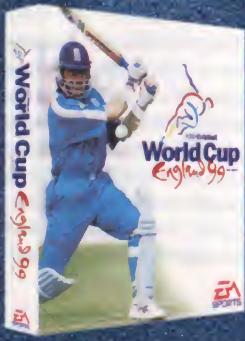
Torment could be the best-looking RPG to date.
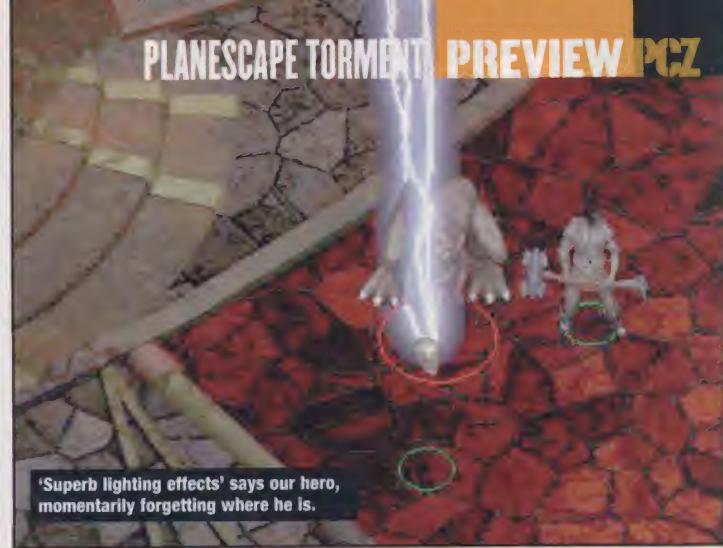
'Superb lighting effects' says our hero, momentarily forgetting where he is.

Diverse terrain and real-time shadows bring the environment to life.

In-game characters are beautifully detailed, it seems a shame to kill them really.
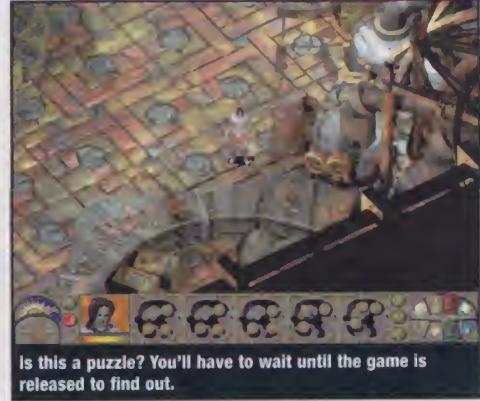
Is this a puzzle? You'll have to wait until the game is released to find out.

PLANESCAPE TORMENT

It's from the people who brought us *Baldur's Gate* but it's different, apparently. *Chris Anderson* looks at why, where and how

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Black Isle Studios
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.interplay.com
OUT September 99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ⭐ It uses the Baldur's Gate game engine
- ❌ Character generation on-the-fly
- ⭐ Adult theme and storyline
- ❌ Gorgeous 16-bit colour graphics

The success of *Baldur's Gate* (PCZ #73, 85%) came as something of a surprise to seasoned games industry 'insiders'. It came out of nowhere to steal the number one spot from illustrious competition. Not that anyone can argue with the quality of the game. It's a superb RPG with extraordinary depth, pretty graphics, and an involving storyline.

But it's an RPG, and as everyone knows, nobody really plays games like this with the obvious exception of the proverbial Anorak Army who, friendless and without any purpose in life, sit in darkened bedrooms across the land pondering over stats that only they can understand.

Not any more. RPGs have become fashionable, and *Planescape Torment* looks like it could be the next big game flaunting its wares on the RPG catwalk. There are several reasons to

believe this game is going to be very big. It uses a variation on the highly flexible *Baldur's Gate* game engine at its core so, technologically at least, it will hold its own against any RPG that may want to take it on in a sort of computer-generated punch up. But, more importantly, *Planescape Torment* will give you the opportunity to build a character that suits the way *you* want to play the game.

There will be no character generation screen to greet you at the beginning of *Planescape Torment*. Your character (ominously dubbed 'The Nameless One') starts the game with a very basic skill-set, and your actions in the game will determine how his character develops over a period of time. It's up to you which

> **❝ *Planescape Torment* will give you the opportunity to build a character that suits the way *you* want to play the game❞**

skills and spells your character becomes proficient in, and whether he is more suited to using brains over brawn to escape difficult situations.

We really like the sound of this

particular feature. People have different ideas as to what constitutes a 'pure' mage or a classic fighter for example. As a result, character generation screens that force upon you what they consider to be an idealistic definition of the character class you choose to play invariably fail, as the designers have no idea what you want to get out of the game.

The non-linear approach to character generation that *Planescape Torment* aspires to is to be applauded then. In theory, you should be able to 'fine-tune' your character in-game if you find you're getting involved in too much melee combat, or your character is too weak to fight close-up and is running away, while frantically casting spells at your assailants.

As far as the storyline goes, the tale of a man who is resurrected from the dead not knowing who killed him or why is not going to win any awards for originality. However, the payback

for this rather predictable scenario lies in the gameplay.

As your character is effectively immortal, he doesn't have to eat, sleep or do any of the things we normal folk have to put up with in day-to-day life. It seems fair to assume, then, that you will spend most of your time in the thick of the action, as opposed to shopping for loaves of bread or a sleeping bag to bring with you on your adventures, which is normally the case with these kinds of games.

RPG purists may well complain about this almost irreverent treatment of the genre, but frankly, we don't care. *Planescape Torment* looks absolutely fantastic from where we're sitting, and we can't wait for the finished game to come in for review. If Steve Hill was here, he would no doubt be encouraging Interplay to 'bring it on', and you can be sure that we'll be pestering them to do exactly that over the next few months. Watch this space. PCZ

NovaLogic's graphics now have a much more detailed feel to them.

Every snowflake is modelled, apparently...

Multiplayer action with multiple aircraft.

Barometric pressures can affect your manoeuvrability.

Tell us this doesn't look impressive. Go on, tell us.

F-22 LIGHTNING III

As the 63rd F-22 flight sim prepares to drop its load, *Paul Presley* begins to experience an odd feeling of déjà vu

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER NovaLogic
PUBLISHER NovaLogic
WEBSITE www.novalogic.com
OUT July 9

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Extensive online support in NovaWorld
- Designed for both the action freak and the propeller-head
- You can talk to other players using Voice-Over-Net technology
- Nuclear weapons

FIRST ENCOUNTER

When the real F-22 aircraft finally enters service some time next century, we can't help but feel it'll be an anti-climax. How much can the USAF show us that we won't have seen a thousand times before in just about every flight sim of the past three years? This same question can also be levelled at *F-22 Lightning III,* NovaLogic's latest addition to this never-ending sub-sub-category of the flight sim genre: what can it offer that we haven't already seen in *F22 Total Air War (PCZ #68,* 95%); *iF-22 (PCZ #55,* 75%); *F-22 Raptor (PCZ #60,* 79%); or even *F-22 Lightning II (PCZ #45,* 90%)?

The most immediate answer is that NovaLogic, finally bowing to peer pressure, market forces and plain common sense, have done away with Voxelspace graphics. Glide and D3D technologies have elbowed their way in and are nestling in resolutions of up to 1,024x768 on *F-22 Lightning III's* monitors. Meaning that NovaLogic can now include all sorts of graphical effects including raindrops, hailstones and snowflakes. Weather plays more than a cosmetic role though, with a flight model that takes atmospheric conditions into account and manoeuvres differently depending on the environment.

What else? Well, contravening Nato directives four to 17 on the deployment of simulated fission weaponry, *F-22: Lightning III* enables you to play with nukes. The only other time we remember a flight sim with nukes was *F/A-18 Korea (PCZ #61,* 90%), and frankly they were terrible – a pathetic little mushroom cloud that would barely flay your cat.

NovaLogic promise something more entertaining this time *(Nukes? Entertaining? – Ed).* The boast is that you can level entire city regions and witness spectacular explosions; although how you can witness a nuclear explosion without having the skin melted off your screaming body is another question. Still, it's good to see someone present the positive sides of mass thermonuclear destruction, instead of whining about morality, ethics and human rights.

> **How you can witness a nuclear explosion without having the skin melted off your screaming body is another question**

The only other area of note (at least in the information that's been released so far) is the NovaWorld Internet support. Not only can you take on other *F-22 Lightning* players in deathmatch and team games, but you can also tackle *F-16 Multirole Fighter* and *MiG-29 Fulcrum (PCZ #70,* 81%) players. Plus NovaLogic are puffing their chests out about their Voice-Over-Net technology, which gives you the ability to chat with other 'real-life' pilots via microphones. NovaLogic claim this is a first, but Interactive Magic's *Air Warrior III (PCZ #62,* 80%) did this ages ago. But, it's good to see the technology getting a wider audience.

So, another chapter in the ongoing F-22 flight sim history is almost upon us, though we'll have to wait until July to find out whether this chapter's worth reading or not. ▨

Bit of an odd, blonde pig-man-thing…

The graphics are good enough to attract real-life tourists.

Hiding in the urinal of the Electric Monks can prove fatal.

And here we have the altar, restored through the benevolence of Ellie Miggins, bless her.

These are Trollocs. Not the most friendly of chaps.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

WHEEL OF TIME

Matthew Burgess unsheathes his sword on this 'complex and involving' game.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Legend Entertainment
PUBLISHER GT Interactive
WEBSITE www.wheeloftime.com
OUT Summer 1999

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- A huge, atmospheric gameworld, coupled with an involving storyline
- Intriguing combination of action, magic and strategy
- Multiplayer mode almost like a whole new game
- Just look at those graphics!

When Epic Megagames licensed the *Unreal* engine to all and sundry, cynical PC gamers the world over braced themselves for a flood of formulaic 3D shoot 'em ups, similar to that which followed *Doom*. However, if the likes of *Klingon: Honour Guard* can prove such cynics wrong, the forthcoming *Wheel Of Time* should have them begging forgiveness for their doubt.

Wheel of Time is an ambitious, first-person action/strategy hybrid based on the series of fantasy novels by Robert Jordan. Set in a world, which like many fantasy creations is full of guttural names and tall men with long swords, the story has you striving to gain control of the Seals (secure bonds rather than cute things with flippers), that hold the evil Dark One in check.

The single-player mode puts you into the doublet and hose of Elayna, female sorceress extraordinaire and member of the brown Ajah (a sect devoted to the gathering of knowledge, rather than the result of a hard night on the curry).

Forced to become leader of the Aes Sedai (chief sorceress), she is the only one who can stand against the forces of the Dark One. Fortunately, she has an array of powerful, offensive and defensive 'ter'angreal' (magic) to call upon, from fireballs and disguise spells to earth tremors.

What this means in gaming terms is a huge and involving adventure that has the potential to combine the atmosphere of *Thief: The Dark Project* with a pinch of *Dungeon Keeper*-style strategy and a subtle RPG flavour.

Jordan's universe is complex and involving, promising a huge amount of detailed locations to explore. Designer Glen Dahlgren promises, "a game that combines the clean immersive experience of *Quake* with real depth and a storyline".

Like any game worth its salt nowadays, *Wheel Of Time* comes replete with a multiplayer option. However, this won't be some half-arsed deathmatch bolted on at the last minute. Rather, options will be

with enough troops and traps to deter the unwanted intruders before sallying out to pillage your neighbours.

As if all of this wasn't enough, *Wheel Of Time* will use a new version of the *Unreal* engine to keep things ticking over. In addition to all the lovely stuff that made Epic's, er, epic such a looker (24-bit colour, multiple dynamic light sources, real moving/rotating brushes, among other things), developers Legend have added a new particle system for those all-important explosions and

> ## 66 *Wheel Of Time* will use a new version of the *Unreal* engine. Legend have added a new particle system for those all-important explosions and smoke effects 99

broadened to allow you to play as any of Elayna's adversaries: the Children of Light, the mysterious Hound or the nasty evil Forsaken.

This is where strategy will come to the fore, as you get to use the in-built citadel editor to surround your Seal

smoke, and some cool rain, snow and wind effects.

Add that to all the multiplayer tweaks and updates made for *Unreal Tournament* and you're going to be looking at something pretty special. Gird your loins... PCZ
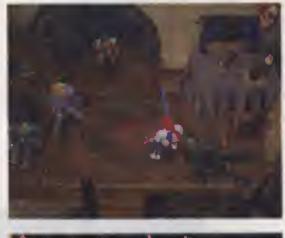
Cutthroats is rammed full of different viewpoints.

While chaos reigns outside, your troops can loot all the houses.

"Can someone please put out those sails?!"

This is the main map screen.

Another town goes to pot.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

CUTTHROATS

It's time to hoist the Jolly Roger! _Paul Mallinson_ sets sail

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Hot House Studios
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.eidosinteractive.co.uk
OUT July

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Authentic historical slant
- In-depth trading/resource management
- Real-time combat elements look very promising
- You can be as good or as evil as you like

"Off to see Adam Ant then are we, sir?"

PC-owning pirate fans will no doubt have played MicroProse's classic _Pirates!_ – a high-seas strategy game released way back in 1987 – and have fond memories of the experience. If you weren't around to witness that particular moment of gaming history, then maybe you want to be around for the next one. _Cutthroats_, from Hot House Studios (the people who brought us _Gangsters_), looks like replicating that magic 'something' that made the original _Pirates!_ such a joy to play.

Cutthroats is set in 'the golden age of piracy' – the Caribbean during the 17th century – and explores the life of a seafaring businessman in a real-time strategy gaming context. Entering the fray with a single ship, a few weapons and a skeleton crew,

your aim is to steal consignments of cargo from innocent merchant ships and execute dawn raids on the treasures of rich Spanish towns. This not only fills your coffers with gold (useful if you want to buy bigger ships, better cannons or skilled sailors), but also affects your reputation as a pirate. And as we all well know, a pirate's reputation is everything.

From what we've seen so far, _Cutthroats_ is presented in a number of different graphical styles. As you would expect, there are plenty of menus and options to explore – this is a strategy game, after all – but there are also a few unexpected surprises in there too, most notable of which are

the real-time combat sequences which switch the game to a three-quarters overhead view (in true RTS game stylee) and turn _Cutthroats_ into something of a swashbuckling _C&C_ clone. Over water, your boats become polygonal vessels bobbing up and down on a superbly undulating sea; on land, whole towns are represented in full 3D, all of which can be

attacked, plundered and occupied in order to expand your empire.

Developers Hot House have put a lot of time and effort into this feature of the game, and it shows. Everything you would expect from a top-drawer real-time strategy game seems to have been included, even though this particular aspect is only a small percentage of the bigger picture. All the inhabitants of the game world behave in an intelligent and natural way: if you scare the population of a town, they scatter to their homes or raise the alarm; if you make a noise, the cows stampede. You have to combine caution and sneakiness with aggression to fulfil your objectives.

Trading plays a very important

> ## "Over water, your boats become polygonal vessels bobbing up and down on a superbly undulating sea; on land, whole towns are represented in full 3D"

part too (you don't have to kill everyone in sight if you don't want to), and as a result _Cutthroats_' 'living, breathing' non-random game world enables the exploitation of a number of valuable resources. This, along with the action elements mentioned above, could make _Cutthroats_ the _Pirates!_ of the '90s. We're certainly hoping that's the case. PCZ
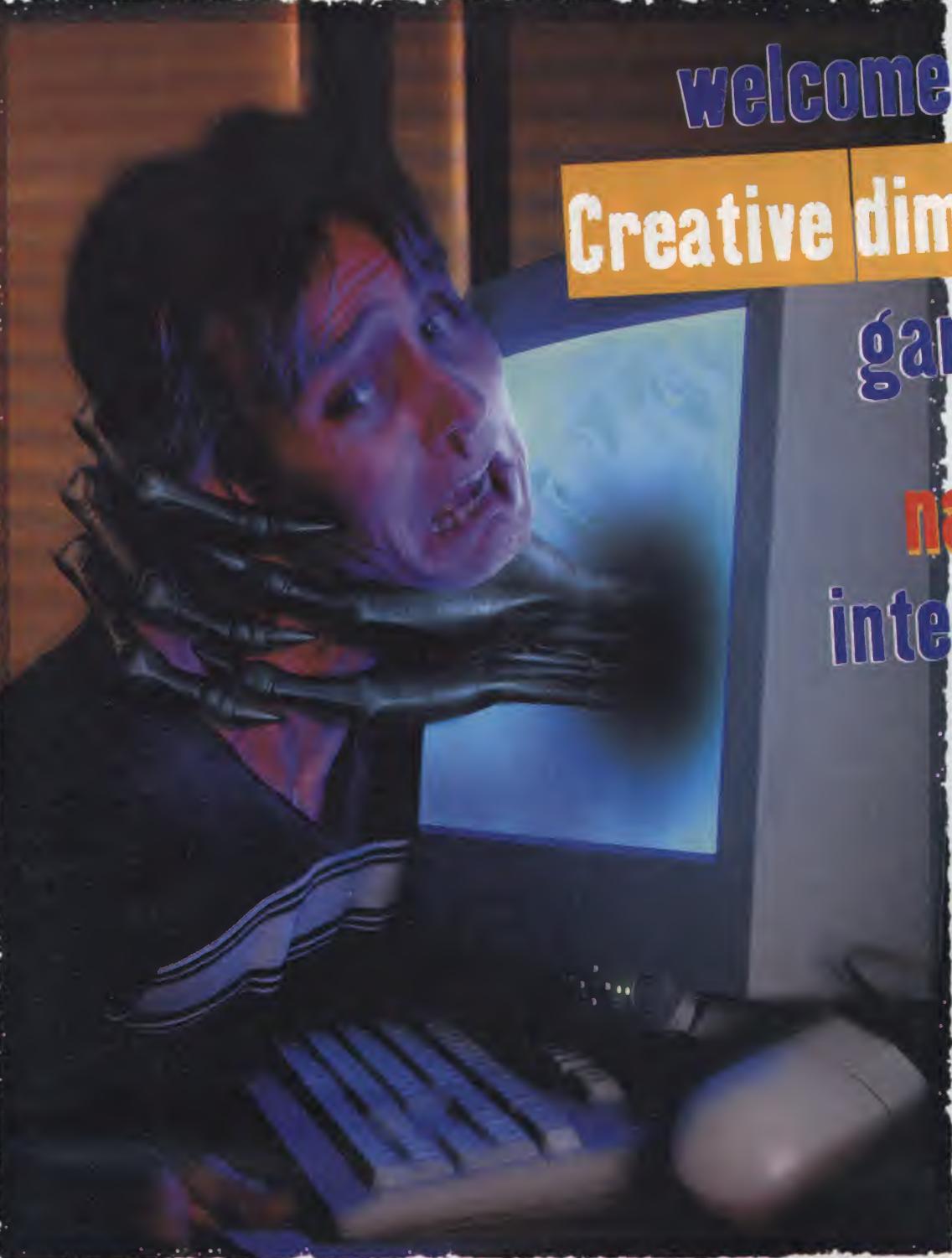
welcome to the Creative dimension, gaming the way nature intended

32 MB

live! the experience!

To get the most out of the latest games you need plenty of power. That's why our new 3D Blasters are engineered with the latest 32MB graphics technology. 32MB SDRAM along with accelerated frame rates and 32 bit colour means faster, smoother gameplay and unparalleled realism.

Enter the Creative dimension. Games will really grab you...and they won't let go.

Visit our website or call 01245 265 265 for more information.

3D Blaster Savage 4 and Riva TNT2 Ultra

- Engineered with 32MB SDRAM for the games of today and tomorrow
- 128 bit architecture and twin texel pipeline for advanced visual effects
- AGP or PCI*

* Riva TNT2 Ultra AGP only

CREATIVE

Your PC's key to another dimension
WWW.SOUNDBLASTER.COM

| Sound Cards | Graphics Cards | Speakers | PC-DVD | Video |

OBSESSED WITH UPGRADING

If you don't know an Adaptec 2940W PCI SCSI card from a Hauppauge winTV PCI, then meet the man who does – gameshead Chris Ralphs, a veritable encyclopedia of PC knowledge since the tender age of 12

⊙ **WORDS** Adam Phillips

It's a nightmare scenario. And it happens to all of us sooner or later. You push the 'on' button. The screen flickers into life, the hard drive whirrs... and nothing happens. You do it again, and again, each time feverishly praying that the kit you spent over a grand on is only experiencing 'technical difficulties' and that 'normal service will resume shortly – please God – so I can play *Half-Life*'.

Visions of work, spreadsheets and, more importantly, that feisty batch of saved games being flushed down the toilet never to be recycled cross your mind. You phone customer support. It's engaged, or worse still, you get through and are put on hold as the sole tech-support bod spends 20 minutes explaining to an American on the other line that the CD-ROM tray is not "actually a mug holder, sir".

More often than not, when you do get through, you feel about as valued as Vanessa Feltz's contribution to daytime TV. The guy, hacked off with that Yank, just couldn't care less. He's probably going through puberty, has spots, can't pull and quite frankly couldn't give a monkey's about your problems or your warranty. With pleas for help usually met with monosyllabic responses, vacuous

questions and a telephone manner more suited to a coma victim than a cutting-edge after-sales rep, you'd be better off looking for a bit of TLC by calling the Samaritans.

But Chris Ralphs can fend for himself when the brown stuff hits the fan – he can strip that machine down like a Vietnam veteran stripping down an M-16 assault rifle, find out what's wrong and put it back together again.

If a game surfaces that requires a

have their fingers on the proverbial light switch.

But you don't gain extensive knowledge like that over night – Chris has been at it for the last ten years. "My dad bought me a Commodore 64 when I was about six," he explains. "And then a PC Clone when I was about 11 – an X20 CPU that boasted a whopping 13MHz!"

His penchant for all things PC truly kicked off when he started playing

> **❝ I think the bug only really bit when we upgraded that first PC, which boasted a whopping 13MHz, with a new expansion card when I was about 12 ❞**
>
> CHRIS RALPHS,
> SELF-TAUGHT TECHIE GURU

fresh set of upgraded parts to get it running above 10fps, Chris can find the parts (invariably on the cheap), install them (getting past silly things like 'Plug And Pray'), and have them up and running quick as a flash.

Such PC tech gurus are often labelled geeks, but the simple fact is that while the rest of us grope around in the dark when anything goes wrong – whether it be a game that won't install properly or a computer refusing to boot – these guys really do

around with its insides: "I think the bug only really bit when we upgraded that first PC with a new expansion card when I was 12," he says.

The age problem – in other words, no cash on ready supply during his early years – delayed the growth of his obsession for PCs until he was 15, when he helped a company clear out its basement of old hardware. "It took about three days just to untangle the expansion cards and cabling," he recalls. "But they gave me about ➡

⊙ CASE HISTORY

PHOTOS Simon Clay

#13 THE PC WIZARD

NAME Chris Ralphs

AGE 21

LOCATION Loughborough

OCCUPATION Studying computing and management at Loughborough University. Also works in tech support on an oil company's trading floor in the Big Smoke

OBSESSION Upgrading, expanding, building and generally tinkering with all things PC

CONDITION BEGAN While he's dabbled with computers for most of his life, Chris only became truly snared when he slapped an expansion card into his kick-ass 13MHz PC at the tender age of 12

HISTORY OF CONDITION From sourcing gear in a company basement at the age of 15, he's continued to build up his extensive collection through the years. Oh, and he's helped punters put their dream machines together as well

OUTLOOK With his future career firmly focused on anything PC-related, he's in for the long haul. And to be frank, with the money you can make from such knowledge, why on earth would you want to stop?

Dabbling with all things tech-oriented...

has seen Chris build 20-plus computers...

in the last two years, just for friends...

A 'pound-per-problem' scheme got fellow students scurrying back to their instruction books.

NO I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT COMPUTERS! PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE!

...truly a handy friend!
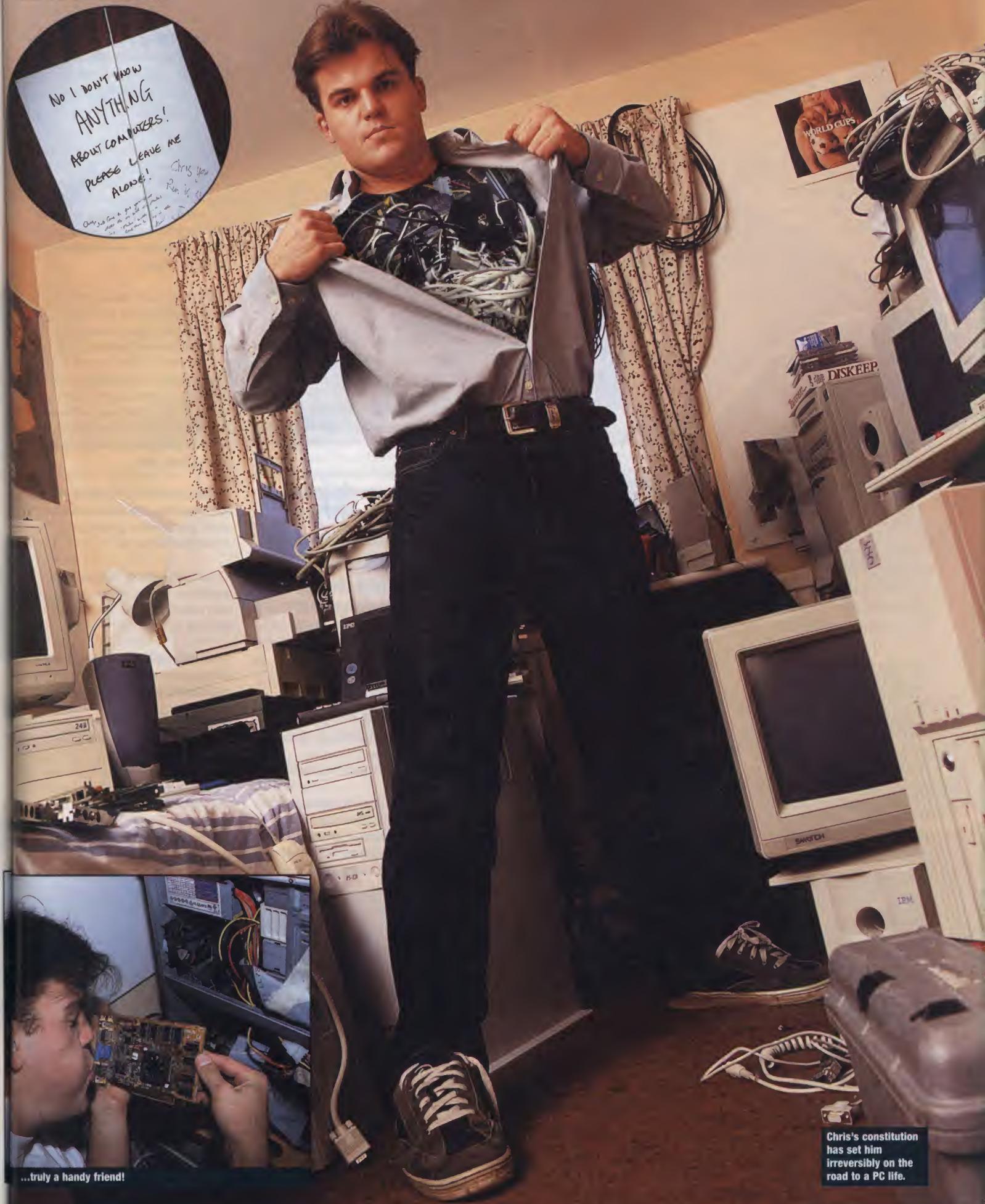
Chris's constitution has set him irreversibly on the road to a PC life.

half a dozen 286 motherboards, a few 40 meg hard drives and memory expansion boards in payment."

From there, it was expansion all the way: his PC Clone was converted to a 286, and he souped up an old 386DX25 in the process, the only hindrance being the specially shaped cases provided by the manufacturers that restricted further expansion.

From such humble origins, Chris has subsequently ended up owning two XTs, "a few 286s", a couple of 386s, and he still has two 486s that are in "various states of decay". Oh, and a 486 laptop. Recently, he bought a 486 from one of Loughborough University's departments for £20. A week later he had upgraded it to a P233 MMX with 48 meg, a 2.5 gig hard drive, a 24-speed CD-ROM, a 3D wavetable sound card and a PCI network card, all connected to a hub and data switch. And then there's the dual PII 350MHz that Chris has built himself in the meantime.

In fact, he's so plugged in that his fellow students regularly drop in to ask advice. Or they used to. "It got ridiculous. I had loads of people
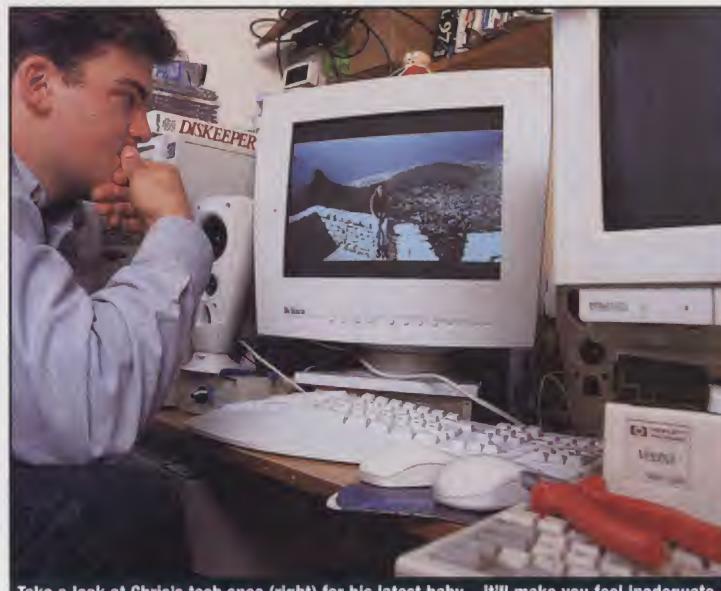
Take a look at Chris's tech spec (right) for his latest baby – it'll make you feel inadequate.

coming round and asking how to install their new games," he explains. "I started a 'pound per problem' scheme – that usually stops students dead in their tracks. Nine times out of ten they just need to read the instructions!"

But, like any Obsessed candidate, helping mates overcome installation

problems is only half of it – he's also built 20 or so computers in the last two years for people he knows. Serious stuff indeed. So why does he do it? Is it purely just to play the latest games or does it run deeper than that? "I think part of it is because it's something that so many people find baffling, although there are more and

> ❝Why do people build model aircraft? It's the satisfaction at getting something looking and feeling 'just right', I guess❞

more people who are catching on. But another part of it is the fact that you're in control (in theory anyway) of your own little world or environment. Aside from that, I don't really have any other explanation. Why do people build model aircraft? It's the satisfaction at getting something looking and feeling 'just right' I guess."

That quest to get things "just right" has already cost him £400 in computer gear in the last three months alone. And 20 to 60 hours a week tinkering with his and other

DIY GURU

Fancy getting your hands dirty? And so you should – there are some real advantages to building and upgrading your PC by yourself

✪ While many mail-order companies offer increasingly good value, there are still savings to be made by building your own PC. As for high street stores, you can spend the same money on one of their entry-level models as you can on building yourself a vastly superior games machine.

✪ It's easier (with proper planning) to 'future proof' your kit by having the right sized case and so forth. *PC ZONE* came across a manufacturer machine that boasted a certain amount of PCI slots to enable easy upgrades – the only problem was that one of the slots was unusable due to the manufacturer's bulky casing. We ended up having to move all the contents into a £40 tower case instead. Doh.

✪ You can make sure that you get the right specs for your needs – in other words you won't be paying for any extras you don't need.

✪ Get really good at slapping a PC together or upgrading them and you can start doing it for other people. And charging them for it...

✪ You'll never have to phone an after-sales support line ever again – or write to Watchdog complaining about them.

✪ *Want to know how to get started? Check out the Power To The Punters panel, left*

people's computers. But again, his initially self-taught skills are set to pay off. Chris landed himself a holiday job in tech support for a large oil company, initially stock taking, then recycling knackered 386s to be redistributed to charities, and
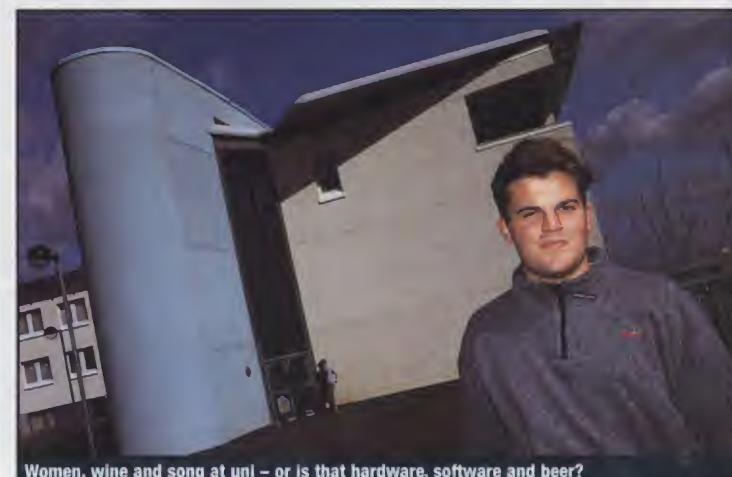
POWER TO THE PUNTERS

Whether you want more information on building your own PC or simply want to upgrade it with the best processor or video card for games, then, as usual, the Net is hard to beat. Drop in on any of the following for an insider view. And if you haven't got a modem yet, what the hell is taking you so long?

TOM'S HARDWARE
www.tomshard ware.com

The bible of technical knowledge, this site run by Tom Pabst is a budding PC guru's nirvana. Chris swears by it and so do we – from intricate motherboard and processor information to essential RAM and video card guides, it doesn't get any better than this.

CPU OVERCLOCKING GUIDE
www.sysopt.com/overc.html

Don't want to start from scratch building or buying a new PC? Then you may be able to overclock your existing processor. In layman's terms, it means tweaking your chip so it goes quicker than it should do

'officially'. Intel do not endorse overclocking (such practices aren't good for business), but with the right advice and technical knowledge, it's not difficult. The only downside is that any warranty will be nullified, but with an old chip in need of a new lease of life, who cares?

DRIVERS HEADQUARTERS
www.drivershq.com

Can't get *Half-Life* to run at more than 10fps or hear the sound on that latest purchase? There's a fair chance that you haven't got the most up-to-date drivers for your flock of specialist cards. Fear not, because Drivers Headquarters offers links to all manner of drivers. A vital bookmark.

NEWSGROUPS
alt.comp.hardware.pc-homebuilt
The title says it all.
uk.adverts.computer
Great for picking up second-hand goodies.
alt.2600.hackerz
The newsgroup for hackers. They certainly know a thing or two about PCs.

Women, wine and song at uni – or is that hardware, software and beer?

to get things 'just right' takes time and money, as well as an ability to blag bits from unsuspecting victims.

subsequently evaluating new hardware and software such as video conferencing packages, multi-screen graphics cards and modems. They're so chuffed with his work that they've unleashed him on that most temperamental of computer 'components' – the user.

Indeed, PCs and their machinations are set to become the running theme throughout his life: "I'm looking towards IT project work or management in the long run, and with 18 months' technical support experience, there's gotta be some decent jobs that would suit me!"

So what does Chris's girlfriend think of him dedicating so much of his time to silicon chips? "Ouch! Good question – she's not very impressed," he confesses. "We live about 150 miles apart and she comes up at weekends. I can usually survive a whole weekend without pulling a computer apart – but only just. The only real problem is that she comes up nearly every weekend during term time and that's when the largest computer shows are on, although she does give me the odd weekend to 'play with my geeky friends'."

An understanding girlfriend? A future lined with lucrative computer contracting? A kick-ass PC always fit for playing the latest blockbusters. And cheap beer at the university. Life has never been so good for PC tech gurus. Indeed, if you need further evidence of Chris's commitment, we'll leave you with an email he sent us: "Is there any chance of getting hold of any of the hardware that you get for review? You name it, I'm interested..."

We're working on it, Chris. PCZ

CHRIS'S "MAIN BOX"

Jealous? You will be. Chris's entire collection of PC goodies is worth about five grand in total. What follows is the tech spec for just the "main box" – the latest machine he's spent time and money on upgrading and expanding to the hilt. It's impressive, but don't take our word for it, read on...

- TekRam Dual PII motherboard P6B40D-A5
- Dual Pentium II 350MHz
- 128Mb Goldstar 7ns PC-100 SDRAM
- Clio2 wide midi tower case
- 8.4Gb UDMA IBM Deskstar
- 2.5Gb DMA Western Digital Caviar 32500
- 32x Leoptics DMA CD-ROM drive
- 6x NEC Multispin SCSI2 CD-ROM
- 6x read/2x write SCSI2 Philips CDD2600
- 100Mb Iomega SCSI zip drive
- ASUS V3400TnT/TV 2D/3D 16Mb AGP 2x
- Adaptec 2940W PCI SCSI card
- Realtek RTL8029 PCI network card
- Hauppauge winTV PCI
- AWE64 Gold 4Mb ISA sound card
- 17-inch Belinea 10-70-20 monitor
- Anir Animax multimedia remote and IR mouse
- Microsoft Natural keyboard
- Microsoft Natural mouse
- 650W IBM Surf sub-sound
- 380W Nicole SD982 speakers

Unsurprisingly, Chris studies computing.

In a tangle? Not our Chris – he's wired up for a life of PC tweaking, much to his girlfriend's chagrin.

No! No more wires, just for now at least...

Chris's mate Simon, he's another one!

Motherboards to die for.
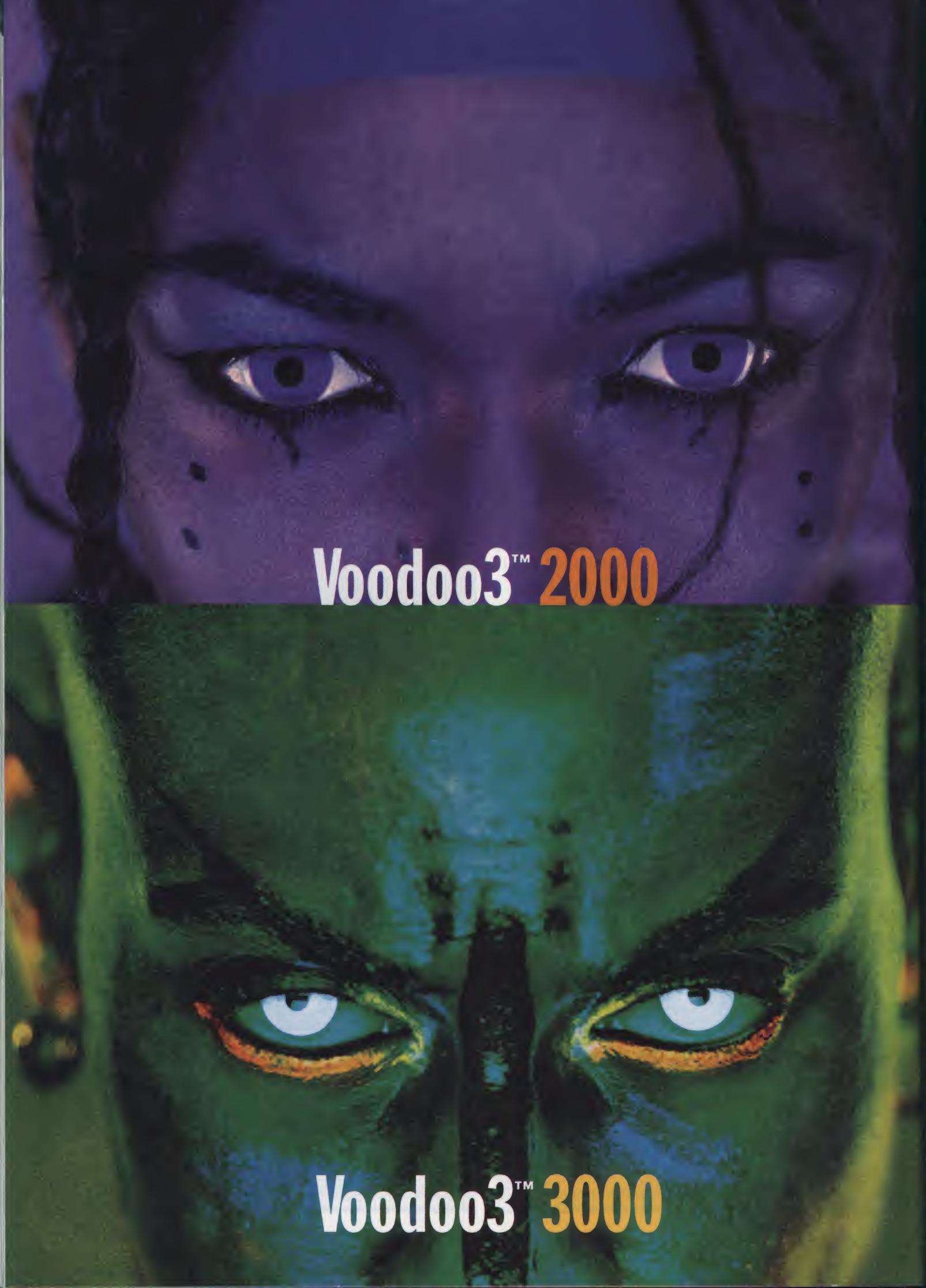
Voodoo3™ 2000

Voodoo3™ 3000

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Which games are taking over our readers' lives? Clutching a clipboard, we went to find out...

⊙ **WORDS/PHOTOS** Craig Vaughan **LOCATION** Sandwell, West Midlands

KARL DAVIES
33, team leader
What's on your hard drive?
"I'm working through *Commandos*, but I'm well stuck on level 7. I've also dabbled with *Grand Prix 2* and *Monaco Grand Prix*."
So which games are you looking forward to?
"If I ever finish *Commandos*, I'll go with the mission disc. I'm glad to finally see *Championship Manager 3* on the shelves – I was beginning to think it was vapour-ware."

FIONA WILSON
30, inquiry assistant
What's on your hard drive?
"Usually strategy games like *Baldur's Gate* and *Alpha Centauri*, but I'm pregnant so I've been playing *Creatures*, *3D Pets*, *Catz* and *Dogz* – trying to hone my maternal instincts ready for the big day."
Have you had any success?
"No, I've reared some absolute monsters. They look bad and behave even worse. Let's hope life doesn't imitate art."

SARAH LANDUCCI
32, civil servant
What's on your hard drive?
"*Baldur's Gate*, *Railway Tycoon*, *Rollercoaster Tycoon* and *Alpha Centauri*."
Ah, you're a bit of a control freak, then?
"Yes – on the computer, at least. My husband's a bit of a tyrant, so I have to do as I'm told at home. Computer games are the only chance I get to be the boss."

DANNY LANGFORD
33, fork-lift driver
What's on your hard drive?
"I'm a retro-gamer and a firm believer in emulation to preserve classics, so my most recent games are of the *Pacman* and *Space Invaders* ilk."
What's the fascination with those crusty relics?
"They're simple and addictive, you don't need a massive manual or a degree to play them and they're cheap too."

DAVID CAMMACK
36, factory worker
What's on your hard drive?
"*You Don't Know Jack*."
I beg your pardon!
"No, you idiot – the quiz game *You Don't Know Jack*. I've just bought my machine for the DVD potential, but I can't believe the games. I've got *Alpha Centauri*, *SiN*, *Championship Manager 3* and *Resident Evil 2* on my shopping list."

DUNCAN SIMPSON
26, steelworker
What's on your hard drive?
"I'm mental for first-person shooters like *Quake II*, *Half-Life*, *Blood 2* and *SiN*. I'm looking for *Turok 2* – your review made it sound well hard."
You'll have a passing interest in *Quake III Arena*, then?
"I'm in love with the idea and I haven't seen it yet. Multiplayer is definitely the way forward. Gimme gimme gimme!"

IRIS WATTS
"Never ask a lady her age", retired
What's on your hard drive?
"I'm playing *Rollercoaster Tycoon*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Commandos* and *X-Wing Alliance*. Isn't it amazing what these new-fangled computers can do?
"When I was at school we had to do maths on our fingers and toes. That's not easy in the dark – it's not like you could just flick a switch and expect electricity all the time..."

MERRILL CHARNOCK
18, office worker
"What's on your hard drive?
"Everything remotely *Duke Nukem* or *Quake*-related. I play them five hours a day. There isn't a map or total conversion that I haven't got."
Looking forward to *Quake III Arena*?
"No, it strikes me as being multiplayer nonsense. They might be able to sell it to the Yanks, but us Brits are a bit more discerning."

ANNA PINCHER
19, sales rep
What's on your hard drive?
"*Half-Life*, *Wargasm*, *Championship Manager 3*, *Rollercoaster Tycoon* and *Virtual Springfield*."
Wow, a girlie gamer
"Yeah, I love them. They get me completely away from my day job. I just wish that PCs were a bit more user-friendly. It took me an age to send an email the other day – Royal Mail could have done it quicker."

LORD DARTH VADER
41, Supreme Being
What's on your hard drive?
"Be gone from me, insignificant prole, lest you feel the true power of the Force."
I'll just get my coat, then
"Unless, of course, you happen to know where I can get a picture of Lara Croft nude. It's not for me... it's for the, er... Emperor, the old perv. I don't look at that stuff. Not much point, since I'm pretty much a charcoal briquette from the waist down."

PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the *ZONE* reviews first

THE HALL OF SHAME

◆ These are the games that we still haven't been sent for review. This means they're either completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. This month's offenders (some of them have been in our Hall of Shame for some time, eh Maxis?) are...

LULA VIRTUAL BABE Take 2
STREETS OF SIMCITY Maxis/EA
CENTIPEDE Hasbro
MEGAMAN X-4 Virgin
V-RALLY Infogrames

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at *ZONE* pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 100. This is where you get the opportunity to get your point of view into *PC ZONE*. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.

ALL THE LATEST GAMES REVIEWED & RATED

DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

PCZONE CLASSIC **90-100%** Here at *ZONE* we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is awarded the *PC ZONE* Classic award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED **80-89%** If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a *PC ZONE* Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-69% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre or you see it at a reduced price.

PCZONE PANTS **0-19%** Games that score under 20% should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating, and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

76 KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME

82 X-WING ALLIANCE

84 REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL

88 WILD METAL COUNTRY

92 OFFICIAL FORMULA ONE RACING

100 COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

REVIEWS A-Z

This month's reviews in order

KINGPIN:
LIFE
OF CRIME

★ £39.99 • Interplay
• Out end of June

"If you've got a strong stomach and aren't offended by foul and abusive language, then *Kingpin* is a beautiful thing"
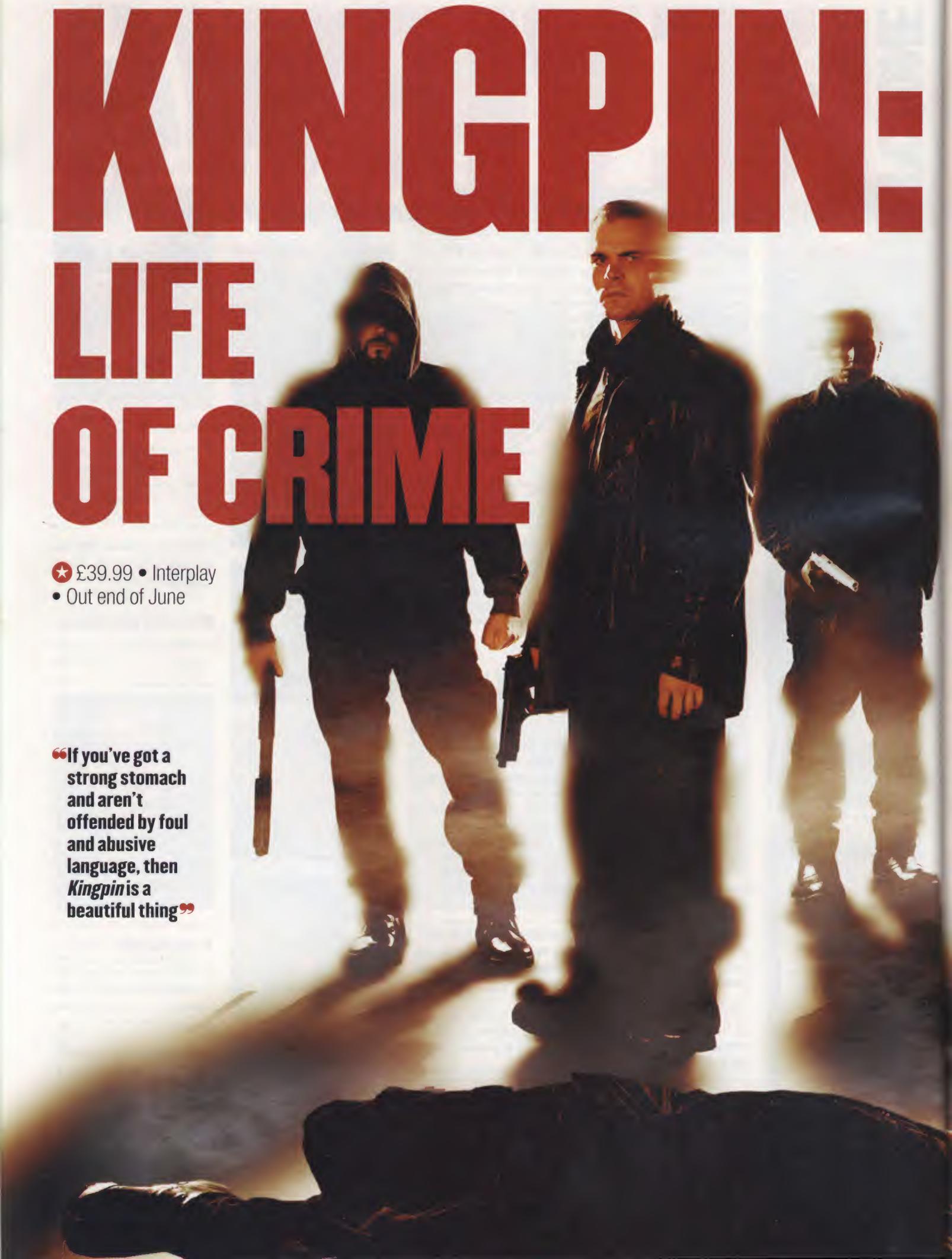
The gang's all here. *Kingpin*'s 16-payer DeathMatch in all its bloody glory. Like a power cut in an abattoir.

Apparently, crime doesn't pay. *Steve Hill* disagrees. Ker-ching!

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **REQUIRES** 3D card
WE SAY It looks a lot better with a TNT card

PC ZONE CLASSIC

ALSO CONSIDER

HALF-LIFE (Sierra, £39.99) God's own 3D shooter, this is generally recognised as the benchmark to which other games must aspire.
PCZ #71, 95%

QUAKE II (Activision, £34.99) The original – and, some maintain, the best – use of the *Quake II* engine. If nothing else, it's still worth a dabble in multiplayer. *PCZ #59, 97%*

SIN (Activision, £39.99) The 3D action game as cheesy movie put a lot of people off, and *SiN* is not without its knockers. The new mission pack, *Wages Of SiN*, is certainly worth a look though.
PCZ #70, 91%

Games are for kids. It's an easy generalisation to make, and one glibly bandied about by the great unwashed to justify their ignorance of arguably the most advanced form of entertainment yet conceived. Historically, at least, it's a vaguely accurate accusation. However, the sweaty oiks shovelling ten-pence pieces into a *Space Invaders* machine in their lunch hour have long-since grown up; something that can't always be said for the games themselves, which often live up to their childish image. Some day a real game will come and wash all the scum off the streets…

Step forward *Kingpin*. Here is a game that would not take it any more. Whores, scum, buggers, queens, fairies, dopers, junkies. Sick, venal.

KEEP IT REAL

If you've been hiding under a rock for the last couple of months or are simply a newcomer to the wonderful and frightening world of *PC ZONE*, here's the lowdown on the game they're all calling *Kingpin: Life Of Crime*. Using the *Quake II* engine, it eschews the contrived fantasy setting of many of its contemporaries in favour of gritty realism, the action taking place in the seedy underworld of organised crime. Much has been made of *Kingpin*'s real-world setting, and while this is certainly a commendable endeavour, it's worth pointing out that the game is by no means a documentary. Influences are many and varied, and have been taken from all walks of life, not least the home town of developers Xatrix, the plan at one point being to set the action in South Central LA.

Good artists borrow, great artists steal, and further inspiration has been gleaned from the films of Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino, no shirker himself when it comes to robbing ideas. And if we want to get all Barry Norman about it, there are numerous movie signposts to look out for, from *The Hudsucker Proxy* to *Brazil* to *Blade Runner*, via *Trainspotting* and *Scarface*. There's even a character lifted directly from *The Big Lebowski*. However, *Kingpin* also doffs its cap to the old-school villainy of Al Capone and his cohorts, and has eventually mutated into some kind of alternate version of this century's past. Throw in a contemporary rap soundtrack – provided by Cypress Hill, no less – and what you have is effectively gangster meets gangsta.

I'M THE DADDY NOW!

Urban decay is rife, burned-out buildings scar the landscape, and vicious gangs rule the streets. Beginning as little more than a gutter punk, the idea is to rise to the top of the criminal ladder and eventually usurp the titular Kingpin. If you've ever seen the film *Scum*, it's a bit like becoming The Daddy. This can be achieved by a variety of means, most of which involve inordinate amounts of sickening violence. We're not easily shocked here at *PC ZONE*, but the wanton brutality of *Kingpin* has been enough to raise the eyebrows of even the most battle-hardened reviewer. Make no mistake, this is adult material in every sense. Skulls are caved in, limbs are shot off, bodies are burned beyond recognition, and heads explode in an unabated orgy of bloodletting. And to top it all, the action is decorated with some of the most foul and abusive language this side of a Tourette's convention. Serious street slang is employed throughout, and barely a sentence passes that doesn't contain an example of industrial language at its most graphic. Shit, piss, cock, bitch, motherf**ker. We await the inevitable *Daily Mail* headlines with relish.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

There is far more to *Kingpin* than a sanguine shooting gallery with swearing though, as it is actually a fairly sophisticated take on the 3D action game, incorporating elements of puzzle solving, exploration and adventure, at times even coming perilously close to RPG territory. Simply taking to your neighbours' heads with a lead pipe is no guarantee of success – although it is a lot of fun – and it can often be more beneficial to attempt some kind

If you can keep your head, you're bloody lucky.

Killing policemen is too controversial even for developers Xatrix. Instead, a contrived private security guard serves the same purpose.

of conversation with the natives. This is where *Kingpin*'s unique chat system comes into its own, offering three modes of approach. Which is essentially all any adventure game does, they just disguise it with wordy sentences. Positive, neutral and negative attitudes can be expressed, and success is dependent on a combination of who you're talking to, the situation and your respective weaponry.

Information can be gleaned at a price, and thugs can be hired to help out with the numerous rumbles. Performing various jobs enhances your criminal reputation and begins your ascent – or downward spiral – towards becoming the Kingpin. Character interaction plays a crucial part in many of them. For instance, one job involves cracking a safe. Two safe crackers are available, each offering their services for a different price. The cheaper one uses cruder methods and may attract attention, whereas the expensive one is an expert lock picker. Having hired one, you then have to lead him to the safe, take out any enemies and protect him while he gets the job done.

> **"Taking to your neighbours' heads with a lead pipe is no guarantee of success – although it is a lot of fun"**

The game is spread over six episodes, each of which combines action and adventure in a ratio of roughly three to one, although this can vary depending on your approach. They each have a hub, where the Pawn-O-Matic weapon shop is located, with around four levels leading off it. The episodes generally begin pensively, involving asking questions and gauging the lie of

the land. Stealth plays its part – there's even a sneak key – although running in like John Wayne can be equally effective. Eventually you begin to piss people off, and a climactic shoot-out becomes inevitable if you're to progress to the next stage.

LOCK, STOCK & BARREL

At its core, *Kingpin* is still a traditional 'here's the key, there's the door'-type shooter. However, the keys have been disguised as objects more in keeping with the real world. For instance, giving a bottle of whisky to a tramp yields some information; learning the combination of a safe gives you access; or finding a battery enables you to start a motorbike and ride off to the

Headache? Try shotgun.

SIX OF THE BEST

Every episode has a boss – a crime boss. They're all underlings of the Kingpin, who you eventually meet up with in the last episode. Along with the crime bosses, each episode also has one predominant gang

EPISODE I – Skidrow
You've pissed off Nikki Blanco, and this alleyway is where you were dumped. The lowest of lowlifes abound, with the Sewer Rat and Scorpion gangs in a battle to control the turf. Expect an urban setting with lots of burned-out buildings. In fact, put this month's cover CD in the drive and play the game, although bear in mind that it's an early alpha version.
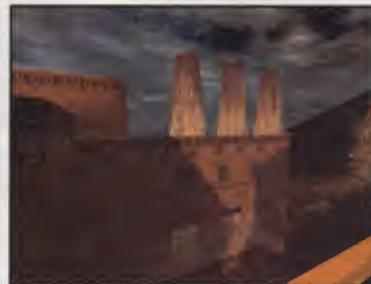
EPISODE III – Steeltown
The headquarters of Moker steel. There are a lot of unfortunate souls who've been enslaved by Kingpin lieutenant Moker, and you have to liberate a number of them if you want to make it out alive. Expect a heavy industrial setting, with dark steel mills and smelting plants. The developers even watched *The Full Monty* to get a flavour of the beautiful city of Sheffield.

EPISODE V – The Wharf
Once you're out of Radio City you need to track down the Kingpin's master weapons maker and designer, Dr Zigfried Hellman. His design and manufacturing lab is reputed to be hidden somewhere near the Radio City wharf. Expect a dark and dangerous wharf area with loads of boats and stuff – a bit like Portsmouth on a Friday night.

EPISODE II – Poisonville
This is the place where all the toxics, caustics and solvents are made. There's perpetual acid rainfall, and the enemies are definitely more organised than Skidrow. Poisonville is run by Nikki Blanco, who is responsible for having you beaten to within an inch of your life at the game's outset. Expect an acid-scarred industrial setting. Residents of Ellesmere Port will feel at home.

EPISODE IV – Radio City
Big city, bright lights. Now that you've disrupted his chemical and steel supplies, the Kingpin wants you six feet under, and there are plenty of volunteers in Radio City. Watch out for the Freqs, fanatical religious freaks who obey only the commands of their deadly leader Blunt. Expect a *Blade Runner*-esque cityscape, with a nod towards both New York and Gotham City.

EPISODE VI – Crystal Palace
This is it: the Kingpin's headquarters at Selhurst Park, South London, a venue shared by Wimbledon FC. You first need to make your way through a series of elevator shafts to get to the final battle in the Kingpin's penthouse, which is packed with his best soldiers and a few other surprises, making for an epic *Scarface*-style showdown. Expect a lavish, art deco, gothic setting, proof that crime does pay.

"Get da fugg outta my bathroom, you mudafuggin' poivert!"

In common with a number of great games, you get to kill dogs.

Reservoir Dogs, anyone?

"Now which one of you said Jehova?"

Reloading can be time-consuming, and may cost you your life.

BAN THIS SICK FILTH!

Will the British Board Of Film Censors (BBFC) allow us to see the 'full-on' Kingpin?

The game reviewed here is the full, unexpurgated version of Kingpin, as the developers intended it and, in any well-ordered society, as it should be released. However, whether this version actually appears on the shelves in the UK remains to be seen, as the notoriously inconsistent BBFC have yet to cast their censorial eyes over the content.

Kingpin makes no pretence to being a family game, and the potential is clearly there for some kind of misguided moralistic stance to be taken. It has already been configured to appear differently when running under French or German versions of Windows (although it's hardly going to take a degree in computer science to change it to US Windows), and it's to be hoped that the same thing doesn't happen here. We certainly don't want another Carmageddon on our hands. So when the pious twats at the BBFC are considering their decision, they should perhaps bear in mind that on Easter Sunday Channel 4 screened Reservoir Dogs uncut, thereby enabling children of all ages to witness sickening acts of violence, culminating in a policeman having his ear sliced off and being doused in petrol.

Because Kingpin is a game, the attitude seems to be that young minds will be warped. Kingpin is aimed solely at adults, who should be given the freedom of choice to decide what they play in the privacy of their own homes.

Two guns, but no forehead.

If short-term memory loss is a problem, this handy notepad outlines your next objective.

"It's merely a flesh wound."

In certain areas of the game it's compulsory to holster your weapon. Failure to do so results in you being shot in the face.

"Do you feel lucky, punk?"

TRAIN DAMAGE

A simple problem, and a simple solution for our intrepid Yorkshireman

1 "Eh oop! Bleedin' door's blocked!"

2 "What's that bloody great train doing theer?"

3 "Let's see wor 'appens if we turn this."

4 "Shittin' 'ell! That's done it."

5 "Up your blockage!"

MY UZI WEIGHS A TON

Single-player *Kingpin* rocks big bells, that we already know. But what about the multiplayer side of things?

Well, Xatrix haven't slacked in this area either. *Kingpin* multiplayer comes in four different flavours, for up to 16 players: straight deathmatch (kill every bugger in sight); capture the flag (defile the enemy's turf); Cash Match (steal money from dead players, the winner being the guy with the most dosh at the end of a game); and team-based 'gang' warfare. Here's what the *PC ZONE* team thought of it…

MALLO

"Initially *Kingpin* deathmatch seemed pretty run-of-the-mill, but after a few plays it really grew on me. The flame-thrower – as I'm sure everyone here agrees – provides a significant amount of comedy value, especially the piercing screams that emanate from hapless victims.

"As for the other weapons, the HMG is maybe a bit too powerful, although reload times compensate for that. What I like most about this, though, is the fact that the run speed is very quick, which makes for fast and furious deathmatching."
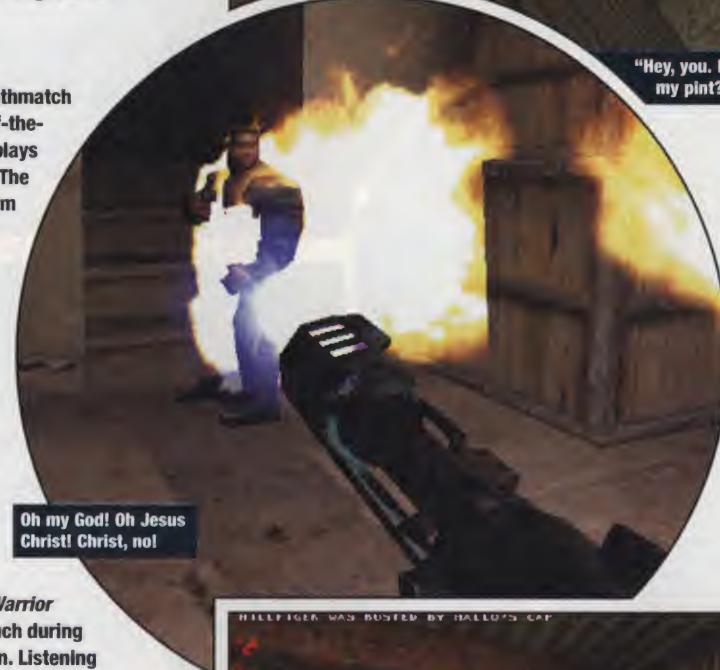
RICHIE

"Not since *Shadow Warrior* have I laughed so much during a deathmatch session. Listening to Paul Presley screech in pain as his skin dripped to the floor will remain in the memory for a long time to come.

"The shotgun is certainly the finest yet in a 3D shooter, and the explosions are so realistic that you almost recoil. However, visuals aren't everything. As Mallo said, *Kingpin* breaks no new ground. For senseless gratuitous violence, though, nothing else comes close."

CHRIS

"*Quake II* deathmatch never really grabbed me, but for some reason – probably the sadistic glee you get from torching your friends with the flame-thrower – I found *Kingpin* deathmatch a heck of a lot of fun. How long that will last, though, only time will tell.

"I liked the various gaming styles, especially Cash Match, which is very original, and the weapons seem fairly well-balanced. The whole office will be playing *Kingpin* deathmatch some time – when we've all completed the single-player game, that is."

MARK

"The dark setting of gritty streets, dirty rooftops and derelict buildings makes for a pretty tense atmosphere, and killing people you know in the uniquely violent *Kingpin* way is actually quite therapeutic.

"Once I'd been set on fire a couple of times I couldn't rest till I got my hands on the flame-thrower. My only complaint is that you can't set other people on fire by spreading the flames from your own body."

next level. Health still comes in medical bags – although Xatrix did toy with the idea of having a doctor – and the game will be familiar territory to experienced action fans. For all its realism, it's still largely set in Warehouse World, littered with numerous piles of immovable crates. Whereas it may not advance the genre massively, it's still a superb take on the 3D action game, given gravitas by the adult nature and the superbly realised locations, evoking a real air of menace.

The *Quake* engine and its various modifications have effectively provided an industry standard for the 3D action game.

"Hey, you. Did you spill my pint?"

Oh my God! Oh Jesus Christ! Christ, no!

Looks like that's the end of whoever that was.

Looks like someone's been painting the town red tonight.

The technology is given; making it into a good game is down to the imagination and creativity of the developers. In fashioning an absorbing storyline and a believable world, Valve produced the masterpiece that is *Half-Life*. Conversely, Ritual went for all-out corny action with *SiN*, and Ion Storm are still labouring over the cod fantasy of *Daikatana*.

But in just over a year, Xatrix have managed to take the 3D action game in a different, more adult-oriented direction. If you've got a strong stomach and aren't offended by foul and abusive language, then *Kingpin: Life Of Crime* is a beautiful thing, and one

> **Whereas it may not advance the genre massively, it's still a superb take on the 3D action game, given gravitas by the adult nature and the superbly realised locations**

which could open the floodgates for more adult games. In fact, the developers of the next Duke Nukem game have already thanked Xatrix for opening the door, which should bode well for the future. PCZ

PCZVERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** Obscene language • Sickening violence • Cool music • Menacing atmosphere

⊖ **DOWNERS** Warehouse World • Needs a hefty PC • Not as absorbing as *Half-Life*

92 Classic adult entertainment

TOOLS R US

If you're going to kill people mercilessly, you're going to need some weapons. These can either be found lying around on the ground, fleeced from the twitching corpses of your victims, or bought at the Pawn-O-Matic weapons shop, of which each level has one. Modifications can also be bought for some of the weapons, increasing their capacity for slaughter. Here's a look at part of *Kingpin*'s armoury

LEAD PIPE
Mods: None

The default weapon – and one that should be familiar to fans of Cluedo – it's only a marginal improvement on using your bare hands. While it's not the best for inflicting damage, it comes in handy for breaking down fences, opening crates, and other chores where you don't want to waste valuable ammunition. With its short length, you need to keep moving if you plan to use it in a fight. If your opponent isn't carrying a gun, you can inflict enough damage with the lead pipe to kill or at least seriously mame.

CROWBAR
Mods: None

Clearly a 'tribute' to *Half-Life*, the crowbar can be bought early on in the game. A marked improvement over the lead pipe, it offers extended reach and also does twice the damage. Again, it's also useful for breaking fences and so forth, as well as its more gruesome function of bludgeoning people to death in cold blood. If you can't find or afford a gun, then the crowbar is the best bet to give you a fighting chance.

PISTOL
Mods: Magnum (2x damage); rate of fire increase (2x firing speed); reload (cuts reload time in half).

The .45 semi-automatic pistol is the first projectile weapon in the game, and you need it to complete the first level. Pistols pack a decent punch, but they can be wildly inaccurate, especially at any distance beyond 15 feet, and the thugs can absorb a number of shots. Highly modifiable, the hope is that the pistol

won't be immediately discarded, because with all three modifications it's a very dangerous weapon.

SHOTGUN
Mods: None

A step up from the pistol, at close range it's usually enough to blow an arm or leg off your target, or put them down for good. As powerful as it is, the shotgun has two negative features: a long reload cycle, and a very wide spread at long range. These two factors make the shotgun a good weapon to give you stopping power at close range, where things can get really nasty, but not at medium to long range.

TOMMY GUN
Mods: None

The quintessential gangster weapon. As shouty punks The Clash sang: "Tommy gun, you ain't happy unless you got one…" This automatic machine-gun spits out lethal .45 calibre bullets at a high rate of fire, mowing down anything in your path. It's the most powerful lead-shooter in the game, and can cut through a crowd like they were made of warm butter. However, the Tommy gun isn't very accurate at long range. It still brings someone down, but you get better results at medium to close range.

HMG
Mods: Cooling jacket (full clip firing without downtime)

The heavy machine-gun fires high muzzle velocity .308 rounds in bursts of three shots. There's approximately a 1.5-second downtime between bursts to cut down on weapon damage due to overheating. Simply put, this beast can drop just about anything in its tracks. It's deadly accurate at long range, making it ideal for picking off thugs before they see you coming. The 1.5-second delay between bursts isn't much of a factor, since anyone who absorbs all three rounds won't be bothering you any more.

BAZOOKA
Mods: None

The bazooka fires a flaming projectile that inflicts incredible damage upon impact, throwing shrapnel in all directions. It obliterates just about any target. As bad as being hit by the actual projectile can be, being inside the blast radius is no picnic either, the splash damage area proving powerful enough to kill most enemies outright.

FLAME-THROWER
Mods: None

Shoots a deadly fiery liquid that sticks to anything it comes into contact with. Once on fire, the target burns for several seconds, and continuous damage will be inflicted during that time, while they run around screaming like the demons of hell. If the target can escape, the flames eventually go out. Although the flame-thrower is an intimidating weapon, your target is able to fight back while on fire, so move in for the kill with another weapon to finish the job.

X-WING ALLIANCE

⭐ £39.99 • LucasArts • Out now

> "Instead of mission-based progression, *X-Wing Alliance* is story-driven from the off"

Join the Rebellion and you get a nice, posh vestibule to play around in. Who cleans these places anyway?

Deep in the bowels of the Death Star. Make sure you have rudder control on your joystick and then you can do lots of smart rotatory motions.

"How can they be jamming us when..." – da da da da – "they don't know we're coming." The trap is sprung at Endor while the Emperor cackles in glee.

All radio traffic, mission goals, and local activity is now permanently logged on your HUD, so no more getting lost or panicking mid-mission.

Finally, after years of waiting, we get to fly the Millennium Falcon. *David McCandless* is your hairy, incomprehensible co-pilot

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium or above, 200MHz **Memory** 32 Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb Direct 3D accelerator **SUPPORTS** Force Feedback **WE SAY** Yep, but get a good joystick. With rudder action

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

I t is the event the gibbering hordes of *Star Wars* fans have been wet-dreaming of for years. Ever since crappy old *X-Wing* (*PCZ* #2, 88%) appeared on the PC six years ago, featuring – woo – 'gouraud' shading and quite spiffo gameplay, fans of the series have been demanding the opportunity to play the fastest ship in the fleet – the Millennium Falcon.

Whether you finally get to see how Chewbacca picks the winnets out of his furry ass or to complete the Kessel Run in under 15 parsecs isn't important. You get to fly the Falcon, the coolest ship in the *Star Wars* universe. And yes, you can get too cocky in the laser turret too.

Actually, you don't get to fly the Falcon straight away. You fly a bog-standard Corellian Transport ship, which is basically Han Solo's beloved vessel stripped of various enhancements. The ships are owned by a business-minded family, the Azzameens, who run a thriving shipping and storage

company. You play Ace, their youngest son, who learns to pilot the cruiser and thumbs the fire trigger as gangsters and Imperial-backed conglomerates muscle in and finally crumple the Azzameens' trade.

Instead of the drier mission-based progression of previous *Star Wars* space-combat games, such as *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* (*PCZ* #52, 89%), *X-Wing Alliance* is story-driven from the off. It attempts to simultaneously tell a people tale and fill in the backstory of the trilogy, answering many of the mystery questions unanswered by the films along the way. Like, what the Rebels did after being stomped on ice-planet Hoth, how they found out about Death Star II, and exactly how many Bothans died to bring us this information?

Naturally, your companion and co-pilot in all this narrative nonsense is a camp robot. How a civilisation technologically advanced enough to build planet-sized space stations and fly across the galaxy is unable to build an android minus John Inman's mannerisms is beyond us. To make things worse, this poncy, lisping, C3PO look-alike berates you regularly should you collide with a space station or accidentally destroy friendly craft.

As in life, you start your pilot's career with some bog-standard

> "Tough missions require you to hyperspace between target zones, and repel attacks"

YTS job, picking up boxes and stacking them on nearby space stations. Then you get to go on the gun turret, Skywalker-style, to pick off yet more, slow-moving cargo canisters. And all the time you're getting hassled by the Viraxo. Who are they? Exactly. An

alien race so far removed from the movie plotlines that you can execute them without causing ripples in the true *Star Wars* plot.

NOW I AM THE MASTER

Anyway, they hassle you and the argy-bargy progresses, through various double-crosses and plot turns, until finally after the eight or so starter missions, the Empire finds out that you've been sucking up to the Alliance and decide to kick your ass. Thank Christ. No more cargo bay loading. You get to take on some Imperial gunboats and see some combat.

Naturally, things go awry and you soon find yourself fighting for your life and deciding to join the Rebellion. Of course, the Alliance isn't just going to pick up any old vagabond and make them a general, so you have to prove yourself as a pilot and a subordinate capable of taking orders. Cue a variety of tough rookie missions that require you to hyperspace between various

A bunch of doomed fighters follow you down the exhaust port.

Fly as a wingman to Luke Skywalker

At last – a new hyperspace animation.

Looking better all the time. The Rebel mothership in 3Dfx-O-Vision.

● WALKTHROUGH

THE BATTLE OF ENDOR

At last, after about 50 sub-missions, you get a chance to fight the four-part space battle at the end of *Return Of The Jedi*. And rather cool it is as well. All the dialogue is retained and re-acted (albeit by inferior B-list cut-scene voice actors, unfortunately – they should've got Billy Dee Williams back as Lando Calrissian; he was like a painted rock on screen anyway). And you get to see and be a part of what was going on while the Emperor was stroking Luke's lightsaber and his 'Rebel friends' were working with Ewoks on the Forest Moon.

1 "It's a trap," spits fishy Ackbar as the Rebel fleet churn towards the Death Star. You have to pull up and form a fighter screen to protect the cruisers as about a zillion TIE Fighters charge in.

2 "That thing's operational," goes the cry as the Death Star's 'super laser' totals a Rebel cruiser. Shorn of alternatives, the Rebel fleet engages the Star Destroyers at point-blank range, with you as support.

3 "The shield is down," intones Calrissian. But before you can start your Death Star run, you have to fight your way through a mass of fighters. May the Force be with you – you're going to need it.

4 "Lock onto the strongest power source." Deep within the battle station you must use awesome skill to manoeuvre through the tight tunnels, locate the reactor, give it a slap, then get out before it blows.

ALSO CONSIDER

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON 3D (LucasArts, £39.99) With this outside-viewed *Star Wars*, you pilot the entire Rebel fleet around irritatingly well-rendered 3D landscapes. Fun, but ultimately it is mindless. *PCZ #73, 77%*

FREESPACE: THE GREAT WAR (Interplay, £24.99) This gloriously detailed space combat game is currently the genre benchmark. *PCZ #66, 89%*

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING (EA, £12.99) Now out on budget and still looking good, *Privateer* melds trading, combat, live action and huge fat lens flares. Yummy. *PCZ #44, 94%*

target zones, not mess about, destroy the right targets, and repel and survive the inevitable Imperial counterattacks. You then have to take a 'driving test', with you and a wingman deployed against increasingly insane numbers of enemy fighters. And to add insult to injury, all this is done in Y and X-Wings.

Then there are seven battles or chapters of the storyline, each one split into two to eight missions. Once you've gained your licence, you can start ingratiating yourself with Admiral Ackbar and working your way to Top Ace level, as the game weaves its way in and out of both its own storyline and the films' backstory. You help rescue stranded comrades after the battle of Hoth, for example, and get to steal the Imperial Shuttle used for the commando mission on the Forest Moon in *Return Of The Jedi*. In between takes, you fly missions to avenge your father's demise on the Viraxo.

In battle two, entitled Secret Weapons Of The Empire, you have a six-mission quest to tackle the Empire's new prototype fighters. In the next, you trail an Imperial defector who is slipping messages and information to the Rebellions. As the story unfolds, you learn who it is and are sent out to protect him from being assassinated as he defects. In battle four, the Rebels catch a sniff of the "secret military project". You even get to fly a mission as a wingman to Luke Skywalker. Wow.

The campaign progresses until the Rebel fleet musters at Sullust and you can finally do what you came here for – take on the Death Star.

GREAT SHOT KID!

With a shiny new engine, the 3D-rendered *Stars Wars* universe finally looks fabuloso. Although not even close to the grimy realism of the films, you can't help feeling a little loosening of nostalgia's very sphincter muscle as you soar over a vast 3D-rendered *Alliance* cruiser with the hum of the Falcon's engine in one ear and the clashing glory of the *Star Wars* soundtrack in the other.

New additions such as gas giants, nebulas, and half-moons give a great sense of depth to the space field and also help out when your targeting system gets trashed in mid-battle. When you finally reach the Battle Of Endor, the incomplete Death Star II hangs in the sky while the Imperial Fleet and the Rebel ships slug it out above. Brilliant. This is all iced off with new dynamic lighting effects, particles (wounded ships vent plasma), and newer, crunchier, more satisfying explosions. The ship models are far more detailed, and low-polygon variants at a distance mean the game can cramp more than 100 fighters and 30 or so capital ships in the battlefield without slugging the processor.

With *Alliance*, LucasArts have finally rounded off all the corners and closed all the plot holes in their combat games. It's not startlingly original, but it does house all the ships and the best of the series under one roof. No doubt they're busy shining their technology for the endless stream of games that will follow the release of *Episode One: The Phantom Menace* (previewed on page 50). But no matter what fat, chunky ships the new film gives us, our hearts will always belong to the Millennium Falcon. Well, mine will anyway. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

● **UPPERS** Spiffo enhanced graphics engine • Unveiling backstory to films • Fly the Death Star II run • Millennium Falcon (and turret) • Hundreds of training, historical, and skirmish missions for repeated play • Eight-player network multiplayer

● **DOWNERS** Camp droids • Difficult and lengthy route to the Death Star • Early missions boring

88 A new hope

REQUIEM:
AVENGING ANGEL

⭐ £39.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

**He walks into an empty room…
and suddenly a gun goes "boom"…
There must be an angel… playing with**
Charlie Brooker's heart…

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM, P200 **SUPPORTS** 3D accelerator cards **WE SAY** You *need* that accelerator card. An early 3Dfx will do

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

ALSO CONSIDER

KINGPIN (Interplay, £39.99) The other side of the coin. In *Requiem*, you're an angel. In *Kingpin*, you certainly ain't. Why not play both and turn yourself schizophrenic?
REVIEWED ON PAGE 76

HALF-LIFE (Cendant, £34.99) Will it ever be bettered? Of course it will. But not right now. *PCZ* #71, 95%

Reading the Bible Yes, why not crack open the good book itself and see if it's got anything at all to say about angels running around toting rocket launchers. Bet it doesn't.

When you kill something, extra health or ammo sort of 'pops' out of its body. Here's a graphic example.

Nice threads, guys. Now stand still while I blow your chins off.

Before it ate all that GM food, this used to be a gerbil.

We've seen some far-fetched gaming storylines here at *PC ZONE*, but this one takes the cake. *Requiem* is an ultra-violent first-person shooter in which you're going gun bonkers on behalf of *God himself*. We're not kidding: you play 'Malachi', an angel sent to 21st century Earth to wipe out the Fallen – a group of fallen angels – who, sickened by everything mankind stands for, are planning to instigate the apocalypse. You're a *holy commando*.

We're all for it ourselves, but we can't help wondering just how this is going to go down in US's Bible Belt. Presumably they're going to love the fact that for once the player is aligned with the big G, but just how they'll react to the sight of an angel toying with rocket launchers, machine-gunning people in the face – and at one point shouting "Jesus!" with surprise – is anyone's guess. Hyuk hyuk.

YES, YES, BUT…

Okay. What of the game itself? Well, glance at the score if you haven't already: we're happy to report that *Requiem* rocks great big holy bells. This is a particularly pleasing outcome because – well, we'll level with you. For the first half-hour or so of playtime, we thought it was a bit… crap.

> **❝The prospect of spending an entire game playing a sort of 'magic angel' simply didn't appeal. But, we were proved wrong❞**

Dunno why. Maybe we were in a bad mood, or maybe it was something to do with the unusual opening: you start out wandering through "the realm of chaos" – which looks a lot like Hell to us – using your hands to fire balls of energy at a bunch of ➔

One of the more sparkly angelic powers in action.

No time to be truly angelic with this coming towards you.

⊙ WALKTHROUGH

HEAVEN SENT

A taste of transition

Requiem consists of a string of different missions, but they flow smoothly from one to the next, so you always feel you've something to do. This example shows the end of one section, and the beginning of another – to give you a feel for the way things pan out. 'Tis fun...

1 You join us at the end of an early mission. We've been searching for Judith, who was captured by the enemy. After much running and shooting, we find her being electrocuted on a cross.

2 To switch the thing off means having to work out which sequence these three switches should be set to... a clue in another room offers a solution...

3 With that rudimentary puzzle solved, Malachi offers Judith a piggy-back. What a nice man.

4 Our mission now is to escape with Judith intact. Not easy, since she's heavy, dying, and keeps moaning in your ear about losing blood...

You know, I've never seen a stained glass window in which an angel does *this*.

Bullets

The sniper rifle isn't as useful as it could be – but it *is* good fun.

Yes, those are bullets all right. What is this, *Ultra-violent Sesame Street*?

50
382

Crying won't save you. Unless for some reason your life depends on getting your cheeks wet.

LET'S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN

Some of the spells in *Requiem* are genuinely entertaining, and can provide your character with some miraculous powers…

The 'warp time' spell actually slows down time, turning all your enemies into plodding, slow-motion cannon fodder. It's all quite eerily atmospheric – the sound effects even slow down too. In fact, it's *exactly* like a slow-motion sequence from a John Woo movie, with recently shot victims spiralling helplessly through the air, spewing and groaning in a surreal, drowsy bloodbath.

The second most entertaining spell? The 'pillar of salt' effect, which makes your enemies slowly crystallise, disintegrate, and blow away in the breeze. Lovely stuff. If there's one thing this game deserves recognition for, it's the sheer number of *ideas* Cyclone have managed to cram into it.

ugly beasties. Whatever. The prospect of spending an entire game playing a sort of 'magic angel' simply didn't appeal.

But, we were proved wrong. Following a brief jaunt through the wibbly-wobbly chaos realm, you're transported to Earth and things start to seriously pick up. It's dark. It's dank. You're in a big, grimy city. Pigeons flutter by. Armed guards wander around, beating civilians. Intrigued, you start exploring. And before you know it, a couple of hours have passed *without your permission*… and that's it. You're hooked. It's sucked you in.

Requiem unfolds in a similar way to *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%) – although don't get too excited, it's not quite of the same calibre. The

levels blend into one another to form one gigantic, sprawling whole (although it does cheat a couple of times by having you suddenly teleport into a location).

Like *Half-Life*, it's similarly rock-hard in places – health is depleted extremely quickly when you take a hit – and also makes use of occasional scripted sequences to perk your interest. The main difference, in fact, is that *Requiem*'s AI pales into insignificance alongside *Half Life*'s – people and monsters often seem to just run at you,

guns blazing. Still, the variety, the visuals, and the quality of level design make up for it.

PRETTY LITTLE ANGEL EYES

You can't possibly have failed to notice from the screenshots that *Requiem* looks pretty good. Weirdly, the visuals seem to improve the longer you play – the

> **Some monsters are genuinely frightening, especially the ones that leap at your face and start peeling you like a banana**

opening stage looks downright ropey compared to later levels. Aside from the architecture and the fancy coloured lighting, there's those impressive character models that move in all

WALKTHROUGH CONTINUED

5 … and of course, there are lots of guards intent on stopping you from leaving. Time for a quick massacre, then…

6 Having survived that spot of bother, it's back to the pre-arranged meeting spot (a nearby pub). Laying Judith down on the bar, it's apparent she's not in a good way.

7 The barman reckons she needs blood. Yeah? Well if he's such a medical expert, why is he pulling pints for a living, huh? Still, perhaps he's right.

8 Out on the streets, looking for a way into the local hospital. There are quite a few areas in *Requiem* where you find yourself walking around unchallenged by enemies…

9 … but usually not for long. A bad angel's just turned up (you can just about make her out – the red translucent thing in the middle) for a spot of taunting…

Stop it. You're an *angel*, remember?

Oh God no... oh Jesus Christ... oh NO! NO! CHRIST!

Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang.

THE MUNSTERS TODAY

Requiem's scary monsters

Like *Half-Life*, the enemies in *Requiem* are a mixture of outlandish beasties and real-world human beings. The guards are cool, but the monsters are even cooler. Not only are they well-designed and animated, but several of them pull off the difficult trick of being *genuinely scary*. Why? Well, they have beady little eyes, big, sharp teeth, and an ability to suddenly leap huge distances, right into your face. And, like this chap (above), they tend to lurch into view unexpectedly. What more could you ask for?

kinds of unpleasantly believable ways, for instance, when shot, guards don't always just slump to the floor – they often roll around squealing in agony for *ages* (just as you'd imagine they would in real life). Some of the monsters are genuinely frightening too – especially the ones that leap at your face and start peeling you like a banana.

The gameplay itself also improves with play. Not only do you start getting hold of more weapons, but there's also a range of fancy angelic powers to consider. In practice, many of the best ones (usually the most violent) are hard to use in the heat of the moment, but others, like the

Look. The models even have perfect teeth. Say cheese.

'deflection' shield and the 'insist' spell, which turns an enemy into an ally, are indispensable.

Still, there are niggles. In some ways, the game feels a little rushed – which is unusual when you consider that it's nowhere near Christmas – and a few glitches which really should have been ironed out turn up to throw something nasty in the party punchbowl from time to time. For one thing, some of the guards seem to have a bizarre ability to suddenly leap from the floor onto higher surfaces in the blink of an eye. This is particularly disconcerting if you happen to be standing on

the said 'higher surface' yourself. Also, the weapon sound effects seem a bit weedy – the rapid-fire assault rifle in particular makes a sound not entirely dissimilar to rain pattering against the window during a thunderstorm. Rambo would never have stood for that. Still, Rambo wasn't an angel.

PRAISE BE

If the EEC passed a bizarre law requiring all videogames to have incredibly accurate titles, *Requiem* would probably have to be rechristened *The Weird, Holy 'Quake-a-Like' That's Not As Good As Half-Life But Is A Damn Fine Chunk Of Entertainment In Its Own Right Nevertheless*. Not that that would fit on the box. Anyway, if you're tired of waiting for

Kingpin (reviewed on page 76) and you fancy a bit of *Half Life*-style fun, give it a spin in your CD drive. And who knows, maybe all that angelic goodness will rub off on you, and you'll stop spending so much time looking at filth on the Internet. No – thought not. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

🔼 **UPPERS** Unusual storyline • The magic spells are actually pretty good • Some genuinely scary monsters

🔽 **DOWNERS** Unimpressive AI • Not as good as *Half-Life*

89 A decent helping of angel delight

 END

10 ... and to unleash a couple of horrible netherworld beasties, who chase you around for a while, acting all nasty. Once *that*'s taken care of, we've gained a new spell – 'Insist'.

11 This spell is useful for turning people round to your way of thinking. This bloke doesn't want to let us into the hospital, so we'll try it out on him...

12 ... et voila – he steps aside and opens the door. Wonder if the doctors and nurses are going to be friendly?

13 Probably not. The moment they spot you, the nurses start screaming and running away...

14 ... thereby alerting the attentions of the guards again. Cue another gigantic massacre. And a few new weapons. And some more fun.

Night-based levels are a bit spooky.

You may need to, er, shoot yourself up if knocked over.

Those magnificent men in their flying machines.

You never, ever, ever get tired of seeing explosions.

Each shot has to be aimed carefully, but combat is fun.

WILD METAL COUNTRY

⭐ £39.99 • Gremlin Interactive • Out now

"Wanna review a game," we asked. "Hmmm… no tanks," replied Warren Chrismas. "Tough," we said

There's a saying which advises: suffer periods of disappointment, abject failure or just plain old mediocrity, and the great moments, when they eventually come, will seem all the more sweeter.

I have to believe that – I follow a third-division football team.

And you'd better believe it too if you're gonna get into and persevere with Wild Metal Country. This game, you see, can be hugely entertaining at times. Problem is it can also be (whisper it) brain-numbingly dull. But, hey, let's not get ahead of ourselves here (Bit late now – Ed).

Wild Metal Country has a plot, of course (some nonsense about a futuristic civil war between intelligent machines), but Charlie covered that in our preview last month (PCZ #76). All you really need to know is that eight different coloured power cores (glowing crystal things) are scattered over each of the game's 28 vast, mountainous levels. To complete each level you have to collect all eight power cores and dump them at hovering stores, either one at a time or in bulk. And that's it – no resource management or specific mission objectives here, matey, oh no.

Out to stop you getting to the power cores is an ever-expanding assortment of land, hover and air units which, having spent "thousands of years in isolation" (and, hey, that's some rust-proofing they've got), have become "almost animal-like". This means that they look and sound a bit like metal animals and (supposedly) hunt in packs; it does not mean that they pester for food, sit on your lap or lick their balls.

TANKS A LOT

You get to drive a futuristic armoured vehicle, initially from a choice of five, each with varying speed, defence and stability.

Whichever you choose, control is tricky at first; forget your mouse or joystick, this game is keyboard-only. There are separate forward and reverse buttons for the left and right tracks (which, of course, enable you to turn very sharply), and an independently controlled turret (which the game 'camera' is effectively fixed to). The trajectory of shots, meanwhile, is determined by how long you hold down the fire button. Like I said, control is tricky, but you do get used to it.

Weapons include standard shells, bouncing bombs, homing missiles and various mines. And you'll enjoy using them – the explosions are lovely. In fact, the physics of the game engine is fantastic, full stop. Mines bounce down hills, tanks roll over, objects topple and tumble when hit…

> **"Ultimately Wild Metal Country is a great game, but flawed. You have to decide whether you're prepared to work through the tedious bits to get to the action"**

Beautiful, beautiful stuff.

Also impressive is the sense of scale: when you're high up on a mountain, you feel high up and can see for what seems like miles. As you might expect, scoring a direct hit from a long distance is extremely satisfying (even if it is your twenty-third attempt), but the close-quarter combat is fun too. It should
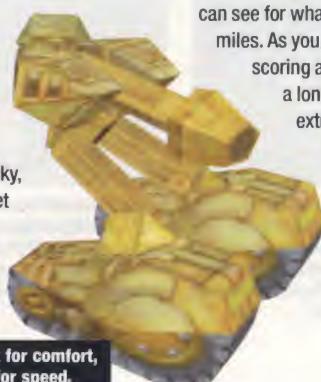
Built for comfort, not for speed.
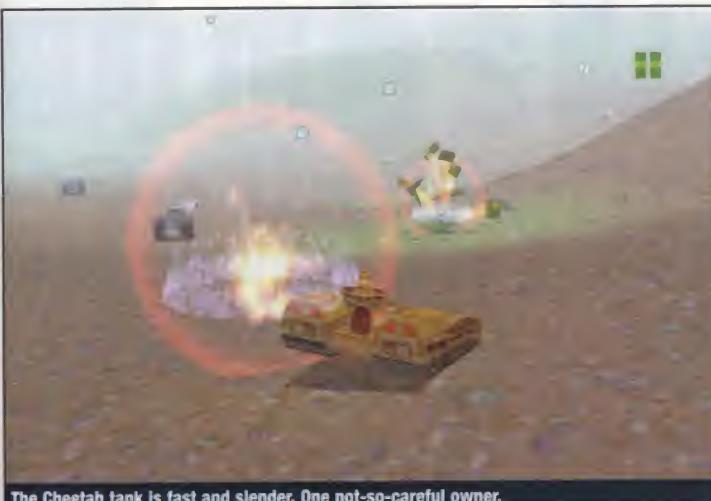
The Cheetah tank is fast and slender. One not-so-careful owner.

The game gives an excellent sense of height. This is nothing. Really.

Sneak right up to sentries to beat 'em.

The explosions really are lovely.

Copters replenish health and drop supplies.

almost go without saying that this is a good multiplayer game. Lots of tanks, lots of ammo, lots of big explosions… Had to work, didn't it? It's almost like a real-time 3D version of *Worms*.

TRACKS OF MY TEARS
Sadly, while the graphics (particularly the lighting effects) are generally pretty smart, the landscapes are as barren as Les Dennis's joke book. Aside from the odd structure (enemy guard towers and sentinels, oil pumps, communication masts), there really is little to break up the monotony of the grassy and sandy wastelands.

The thing is, this lack of landscape detail can make orientation extremely tricky. Sure, you're equipped with a radar/head-up display (and you can drop beacons), but when you're out roaming the mountains the radar only works over a short distance, showing only the long-range direction of all the remaining power cores when you're positioned under one of the hovering stores.

Generally, most of the eight cores on each level are fairly easy to locate, although as they're often heavily guarded (sometimes by electric fences which need to be deactivated), collecting them is

somewhat trickier. Occasionally, however, there's a power core you just can't seem to find anywhere (later you find that some are hidden inside mobile enemy vehicles, and you begin to wonder how cruel game designers can be). The radar may indicate the direction you need to go, but that's no use, as the mountain ahead is impassable. Do you go around to the left, or right? Hang on, just how far round is this path taking me? Do I need to go even higher here? Can I get up that climb? Er, what direction was I heading again? Argggh!

ROTTEN CORE
Take it from me: when you're stuck driving over and around endless mountains (big-bastard mountains, not hills) searching for a final bloody power core, with very few geographical clues, it's pretty tedious.

Remember: you're in control of an armoured tank-type vehicle, not a 4x4 off-road racer. Or a plane. We're talking, like, 30kph. Yes, that's 30kph. Don't be surprised if you find yourself looking for a turbo-boost button. Strangely enough, there is one… but only in the multiplayer game. What bastards!

Make no mistake, if you persevere with *Wild Metal*

Country it offers some great gameplay (the combat is good fun) and some truly memorable moments. I can vividly recall the precise point when I realised that aircraft hovering above weren't necessarily friendly. And I remember being blown away when I first heard the sound of an enemy sprinkler attack (the sounds effects are excellent throughout, incidentally).

Ultimately *Wild Metal Country* a great game, but flawed. You have to decide whether you're prepared to work through the tedious bits to get to the action. I mean, would you stick with a pretty but dull girlfriend just because she's fantastic in bed? On second thoughts, scrub that. Dumb question. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

⊕ UPPERS It's different • Physics model is fab • Great combat • Good, simple multiplayer laughs

⊖ DOWNERS Takes a while to get interesting • Too much aimless driving about • Dull terrain with lack of detail

79 Great combat, dull exploration

COUNTRY FILE

A nine-point guide to some of the things you can expect to see on-screen – including the information displayed on the indicator bar – while playing *Wild Metal Country*

A The HUD radar shows the location of nearby enemies and power cores.
B An enemy. He's about to die. Oh yes.
C That's you, in the weird Roadrunner sphere tank.
D This is what it's all about – a power core thingy.
E Indicators for the eight main turret weapons.
F Indicators for the three mines and beacons.
G Your score plus rescue, power core and danger detectors.
H Your energy bar. It's full here.
I Power core status. Two still need to be collected here.

BALDUR'S GATE: TALES OF THE SWORD COAST

★ £19.99 • Interplay • Out now

An expansion pack for this year's surprise RPG hit. "Cashing in, or adding on?" asks *Andrew Wright*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All Windows 95/98-compatible video cards **ALSO REQUIRES** Copy of original game **WE SAY** P200 with 32Mb RAM recommended

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

A fantasy role-playing game based on the ever-popular Advanced Dungeons & Dragons rules, *Baldur's Gate* (PCZ #73, 85%) took the games charts by surprise earlier this year. Not surprisingly, publishers Interplay have decided to milk the market that little bit further by releasing this bolt-on expansion pack.

Few will complain though, because the single-CD package slots simply and easily into the original five-CD game, and gives you another 20-30 hours of playing time without affecting the outcome of the main adventure.

If you've got a game saved just before the final showdown, you can add *Tales Of The Sword Coast* and backtrack happily in search of the new quests. Even if you've saved a finished game, the *TOTSC* installation program changes it to a point just before the last battle, so you can go back and visit the new areas before repeating the finale. Or, if you prefer, you can start the whole thing again.

In *Baldur's Gate* you need to do plenty of adventuring to gain experience and make sure your characters are strong enough to win. The *TOTSC* expansion pack gives you even more room to manoeuvre, expanding the game world with new areas and a handful of new monsters, different weapons and magic items – but not NPCs, regrettably. The monsters are mainly variants of existing types, such as polar bears, crypt crawlers, undead demon knights and greater

> **"The *TOTSC* expansion pack gives you more room to manoeuvre, expanding the game world with new areas and monsters"**

ghouls, but this is partly balanced by new, high-level spells such as Polymorph self, Chaos and Otiluke's Resilient Sphere, as well as items like +3 plate mail.

TOTSC also gives you the chance to 'up' your characters another level (161,000 experience points) before you step into that final scene. This means that some classes, like druids, rangers, magic users and thieves, can reach two levels higher than in the original game (tenth level for thieves and druids, ninth for mages, and eighth for fighters and clerics, for example).

PASTURES NEW

Four new areas have been slotted in: an island off the Sword Coast that can only be reached by ship, a small fishing port called Ulgoth's Beard, an underground labyrinth, and Durlag's Tower, which has five sub-levels and some new, powerful enemies to boot. We won't reveal the locations, as half the fun is finding the new areas. In fact, it took me about ten hours of play to work out where they were and how to reach them.

There are no fundamental changes to the system apart from obvious bug fixes and a few minor improvements, although clerics and other characters get the benefit of two 'quick' weapon slots. While most missiles are now quicker, you can also dodge spells like fireball (a welcome 'fix'), and druids can buy and use scimitars as per AD&D rules.

Note that everyone in a multiplayer game has to have the add-on installed but, on the plus side, it supports up to six players talking to each other during the game using microphones.

In all, *TOTSC* is excellent news for *Baldur's Gate* fans, with plenty to see and do, but whether it's worth the money depends entirely on your view of the original. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** More areas • 20-30 hours extra gaming • Higher level characters • Useful gameplay tweaks

⊖ **DOWNERS** Expensive • Yet another CD to fiddle with • No new NPCs

83 Nothing really new, but a welcome add-on for addicts

Monday 8th: We found a ghoul having a bath this morning, and the wizard blew its balls off. What a jolly jape...

Otiluke's Resilient Sphere: perfect for those moments when you want to be alone – like in the middle of a fight.

What is the point in having a thief if he doesn't nick anything?

"Of course it'll take our weight. After you – I'll cover the rear."

"Okay, calm down. I'm sorry I ran us aground."

The 'in cockpit' view gives a top sensation of speed.

You can 'accidentally' cause problems for the other cars.

The rain makes handling a nightmare, but evens the odds.

OFFICIAL FORMU

⭐ Eidos Interactive • £44.99 • Out mid-May

Buffing his helmet and wedging himself into the driver's seat, *Craig Vaughan* assumes pole position in the latest official F1 racer

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx and D3D graphics cards, F1-type steering wheels and multiplayer via a LAN **WE SAY** Looks lovely, even without a 3D card. For speed *and* good looks try a P200 with 32Mb RAM and a 3D card

ALSO CONSIDER

F1 97 (Argentum/Psygnosis, £12.99) A 3D hardware-only racer with strong arcade leanings. Immediately accessible, but lacking long-term challenge. The dodgy front-end grates too. *PCZ #62, 92%*

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS (Sierra, £39.99) A clever retro-twist on the racing theme, featuring cloth-capped gents abiding by racing etiquette in antique motors. Very difficult, but very clever.
PCZ #69, 90%

MONACO GRAND PRIX (Ubi Soft, £34.99) The best unofficial take on the F1 theme. An all-out simulation with devilish AI and unforgiving controls. Simply superb – once you've edited all the dodgy team/driver names.
PCZ #69, 92%

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

There are two types of F1 racing fans: those who travel the world following their favourite team and drivers, and those who stay up all hours of the day and night tracking the Championship as it snails its way around the globe. Either way, because of the remote nature of the sport, you have to be obsessed to be a true fan, which means it's become a bit of a merchandiser's pot of gold. So it's no surprise that for the official rights to the associated trademarks, team names and logos, companies have to cough up big bucks (we're talking telephone numbers here).

Gamers upset at the Mickey Mouse team, course and driver details supplied with Ubi Soft's *Monaco Grand Prix* (*PCZ #69*, 92%) can now rest easy because

Eidos have stumped up the cash to provide us with the real deal in *Official Formula One Racing*.

A GAME OF TWO HALVES

Initially, the options are slightly overwhelming, with menu after menu offering the chance to tinker with the near infinite aspects of the game – suffice to say petrolheads will think they've died and gone to racing heaven. Arcade fans who preferred the immediacy of *F1 97* (*PCZ #62*, 92%) will be champing at the bit. The beauty of this game is that it allows you to decide which of the array of realism options to activate. Mixing and matching your simulation preferences with the arcade options means that everyone will feel at home right from the start.

Sim freaks will revel in the ability to alter the car dynamics

(by changing brakes, tyres, wings, suspension, gearbox and fuel ratios) and will spend hours tweaking the subtleties of a car that, to everyone else, seems to have a mind of its own. Joystick jockeys, however, will steer clear of the garage and head straight for the arcade options.

F1 virgins can take advantage of the wonderful range of driving aids on offer, which are a face-saving alternative to screeching around the tracks with L-plates bolted to your car. This 'divine intervention' can automate the gears, offer steering and braking assistance, invulnerability, and the ability to reposition your car favourably after a crash.

Bypassing the realistic bits reduces the game to an arcade-style race for the chequered flag, where the cars stick to the track like glue and the racing line

means nothing. It's not realistic of course, but it *is* great fun.

Anyway, regardless of your preferred gaming style, you can opt for a one-off race on any of the Championship's 16 circuits, or tackle a full season head on. In either case, you can alter the weather, difficulty, realism, opponent AI and number of cars to compete against.

Those reckless enough to head straight for the starting grid without taking advantage of the practice, warm-up or qualify options will soon wish they'd watched the overview of the courses provided by the helicopter fly-by, which is as informative as it is visually spectacular.

THE RACE IS ON!

Once in the driver's seat you'll no doubt settle for either the 'in cockpit', or 'behind car' views. Both give a marvellous sensation of speed, with the tarmac and track-side scenery rushing by.

Interestingly, Eidos suggest avoiding Microsoft's force feedback steering wheel because its turning circle isn't large enough, which means you inevitably end up oversteering and spinning out most of the time. On an F1-type device however, the cars respond to your every command – which is just as well, because racing against all but the dumbest opposition proves to be extremely taxing as they

It's possible to tinker with absolutely loads of your car's features.

The helicopter gives a stunning fly-by of all the courses.

Mist envelops the courses, and it's all a bit spooky.

Going the wrong way adds to the fun, but makes for a short game.

LA ONE RACING

dominate the racing line and constantly jostle for position.

In Arcade mode, aggression reaps its own rewards and it's devilishly good fun causing damage to the other cars, or forcing them to retire because they've lost a tyre, or you've 'accidentally' buggered their suspension – it really is a case of having to give as good as you get.

"Aggression reaps its own rewards and it's devilishly good fun causing damage"

Graphically, the game is superb, and the difference between the software and the 3D accelerated versions is negligible – the software version is a remarkable feat of programming. Low-spec PC owners can tweak the in-game resolution and scenery detail, meaning that even P90 owners will get ample

mileage from it. Obviously, ninja-bast PC owners are in for a real treat, with the smoothness and speed holding up despite the tremendous draw distance and array of special effects on show.

Sadly, there are a few niggles that rub the sheen off an otherwise gleaming game. The spectators are particularly flat, and those in the foreground are a meaningless mass of pixels. Also, when 'rain' is switched on, it affects your car's performance – especially if you're sporting the wrong set of tyres – but you don't actually see it, which is bizarre.

Murray Walker's absent too and, daft and excitable as he is, you do miss him, and it leaves a bit of a gap in the atmosphere

department. The silence is only ever punctuated by the beautifully throaty engine sounds (no doubt some tech-head spent a week shoving microphones up car exhausts), and the pit crews who occasionally bark out advice.

Ultimately though, this is a purchaser's nightmare. While we've seen F1 games that cater wholly for simulation nuts, and others that satiate arcade pundits alone, this is a brave attempt at covering all the bases. But it's expensive, and has to compete with the budget arcade racer *F1 97* (which combines Murray with buckets of atmosphere) and the purist's *Monaco Grand Prix* (the best out-and-out F1 sim). If you own either title, you'll struggle to justify the outlay, but if not, *Official Formula One Racing* delivers the best of both worlds and comes heartily recommended. PCZ

Yes, really. This is the software-only version. Nice.

F1 drivers in 'corn circle hoax' shocker.

✪ WALKTHROUGH

AN EARLY BATH

Crashing out is all too easy...

1 An innocuous looking shunt pushes you into a barrier...

2 ...that knackers your suspension...

3 ...which makes handling a nightmare, and further damage inevitable. And before too long...

4 ...you hear the familiar sound of metal scraping on tarmac as your car disintegrates before your eyes.

PCZ VERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** Bridges the gap between simulation and arcade • Fast, smooth and superbly controllable • Software version is a work of art • Challenging and addictive

⊖ **DOWNERS** No commentary = loss of atmosphere • Crowd graphics are very poor • Expensive

86 Robust, comprehensive and infinitely variable

COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

⭐ £19.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

Tooled up for combat, *Steve Hill* takes a look at this aptly named mission pack

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** DX6-compatible 2Mb SVGA card, 225Mb hard drive space **WE SAY** Yes, that's okay

For those who missed last year's *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* (*PCZ* #66, 87%), it was the creeper hit of the summer, establishing itself at number one and lurking there for an impressive 12 weeks. Some feat – although, to draw a tenuous comparison with the world of music, previous summer hits have included contributions from such questionable talents as Scandinavian chanteuse Whigfield, and the similarly short-lived Outhere Brothers. "Boom, boom, boom, let me hear you say, hosepipe ban," indeed.

Likewise, whereas a lot of people clearly got into

Destroy some prototype aircraft and steal a plane at Neubrandenburg.

The time-honoured technique of running away fails dismally.

Commandos at the time, it has now largely been consigned to the dusty shelf of history, with cries for a sequel proving muted, to say the least. Nevertheless, for those clamouring for more, the news is good *Commandos 2* is on its way.

INBETWEEN DAYS

This, however, isn't it. The much maligned mission pack plays a murky role in the crazy, mixed-up world of games: a supposed enhancement to the original, but without the conviction to call itself a fully-fledged sequel. This is pretty much the case with *Commandos: Beyond The Call Of Duty*, with the words 'gap' and 'stop' springing immediately to

mind, although not necessarily in that order.

Essentially, it's more missions for the first game, with some token new weapons thrown in for good measure. If you don't own a copy of the original *Commandos*, there's no need to tumble headlong into a pit of despair, as *Beyond The Call Of Duty* is a standalone product. However, if you haven't played the first game, you probably won't have a clue as to whether you're going to like this version.

SAME AGAIN?

It's the same thing, and the same feelings of frustration come flooding back within seconds of

mercilessly butcher them as they stoop to pick up their quarry. In fairness, there was a war on. More conventional tools include a long-range, single-shot rifle, chloroform, a club and handcuffs.

As for the missions, they span such scenic locations as the Channel Islands, Rastenburg, Neubrandenburg, Bonn, Belgrade, Nijmegen and Crete, with goals including kidnapping a German officer, destroying a train-

> **"New tricks include throwing a stone to distract enemy soldiers and, more bizarrely, leaving a packet of cigarettes on the ground – the idea being to lure the enemy with the promise of free snout"**

attempting the first mission. This is strategy gaming at its purest: that is, a clear strategy is needed if you're going to make any headway whatsoever. Running about like a blue-arsed fly simply isn't going to work; patience and precision is the only way forward.

However, the interface is fiddly, and with more items to select from, manual dexterity is imperative, with death often being meted out because of cack-handedness rather than naivety.

For the record, the new tricks include throwing a stone to distract enemy soldiers and, more bizarrely, leaving a packet of cigarettes on the ground – the idea being to lure the enemy with the promise of a free snout, then

mounted gun, and sabotaging prototype aircraft.

Here's the bottom line: the original *Commandos* has 24 missions and cost £40; *Beyond The Call Of Duty* has eight missions, and costs a score. You 'do the math'. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** New weapons • New buildings • Bigger maps
⊖ **DOWNERS** Same old, same old • Only eight missions

70 *Commandos* 1.5

Rescue a prisoner from a firing squad in the Belgrade Zoo. The elephants are dead, but the tigers are alive and hungry. Beware when animals attack.

Destroy a railgun and two armoured carriages (and any nearby Germans) at the train station in Bonn.

Hide-and-seek is a lot more fun with a sniper rifle.

HOW YOU CAN BEAT THE PRICE RISE

The subscription price for PC Zone is going up soon, but if you **ACT NOW** you can still subscribe at our lowest ever price of just £9.97 - and save 44% on the shop price. Don't delay – act now to claim your massive savings before it's too late.

FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

This offer is completely covered by our no-quibble guarantee. You can write to cancel at any time, for any reason and we will refund the cost of all unmailed issues

REPLY WITHIN 7 DAYS TO BEAT THE PRICE RISE
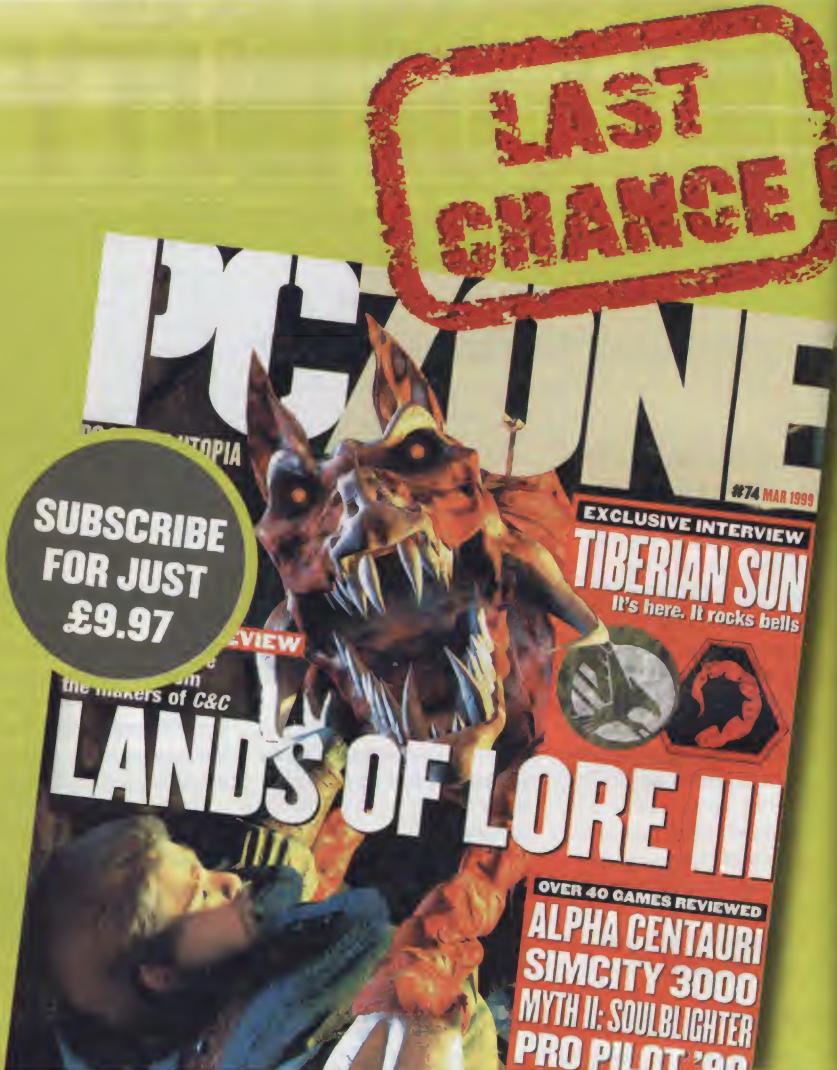
PCZONE BEAT THE PRICE RISE SUBSCRIPTION

YES! ☐ I want to beat the price rise! Please start my subscription from the next available issue

OR ☐ I am already a subscriber, please extend my subscription.

YOUR DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Ms	Forename	Surname
Address		
		Postcode
Daytime phone		Email

YOUR 13 ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION

Complete section ❶ Cheque ❷ Credit / Debit Card ❸ or Direct Debit

Cheque or Credit / Debit Card payment
1 year (13 issues) ☐ UK £21.97 ☐ Europe £38.97 ☐ World £54.97

❶ ☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd

❷ ☐ Please charge my: ☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard
☐ AMEX ☐ Switch (Issue No. ☐)

Card Number			Expiry Date

Signed _____ Date _____

❸ ☐ Direct Debit payment only £9.97 every 6 issues (UK only)

Dennis | Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit | DIRECT Debit

Please fill in the form and send to: Dennis Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST WD7, Bristol BS32 0ZZ.
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager: Bank name

Address

Postcode

Account in the name(s) of

Branch sort code ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

Bank/Building Society account number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Originator's Identification Number

7	2	4	6	8	0

Ref no. to be completed by Dennis Publishing

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society
Please pay Dennis Publishing Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Dennis Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

☐ Please indicate here if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers from companies other than Dennis Publishing Ltd. **P906**

Return completed form to: PC Zone Subscriptions Dept., FREEPOST WD7, Bristol, BS32 0ZZ. (No stamp required)
Overseas readers reply to: PC Zone Subscriptions, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS32 0PP UK

INSTANT ORDER HOTLINE: ☎ 01454 620070

VIVA FOOTBALL

★ Virgin Interactive • £39.99 • Out now

Geoff Hurst... Kevin Keegan... Gary Lineker... Alan Shearer... Michael Owen! And *Steve Hill*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D acceleration through Direct 3D **WE SAY** A P200 with a 3D card should do it

A t last, Virgin's much-touted World Cup game arrives. And while it would be churlish to point out that the last ball of that tournament was actually kicked on 12 July last year, in fairness the game isn't based solely around the exploits of that heady summer in France.

History today is what we have here, with the game featuring every World Cup from 1958 to the

For all Virgin's heavyweight marketing campaign (adverts in *The Guardian*, don'tcha know), in many ways it has more in common with *Supermatch Soccer* (*PCZ* #62, 75%) and last year's risible official England game *Three Lions* (*PCZ* #65, 60%) than it does with *FIFA* or *Actua*. Incidentally, we're into boxed copy territory here, as we expressed doubts over an early version we were sent for review.

> **"The on-pitch player voices are more in keeping with *One Man And His Dog* than with The Greatest Show On Earth"**

present day, including the qualifying tournaments. A mammoth feat, this involves more than a thousand international teams and some 16,224 players, fact fans

Impressive indeed, although it could be argued that the time might have been better spent improving the game, as it certainly isn't instantly playable.

ALSO CONSIDER

FIFA 99 (EA Sports, £34.99) Still the football game of choice at *ZONE* HQ, this is going to take some dislodging. *FIFA 2000*, anyone?
PCZ #71, 92%

ACTUA SOCCER 3 (Gremlin Interactive, £34.99) Close but no cigar, this is still a good-looking and very playable effort. *PCZ* #72, 89%

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEASON 1998-99 (Eidos Interactive, £39.99) An improvement on the *World League Soccer* engine, this is a viable alternative to the big two.
PCZ #76, 86%

SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION (GT Interactive, £19.99) Largely the preserve of bluff old traditionalists, this is the way football games used to be.
PCZ #69, 90%

SIMULATION STREET

These doubts have been largely borne out, and while *Viva Football* is a bold attempt at simulating football – making use of space, playing the ball behind the defence – there's a school of thought that says football games should be the equivalent of edited highlights. Even the keenest of fans will concede that large parts of a real football match are inestimably dull, and it's only the importance of the occasion and the lung-bursting ecstasy of a goal that erases the memory of the despair that precedes it. The same can't be said about a mere video game, which needs to be constantly entertaining. What developers Crimson have succeeded in doing is recreating all the tedious parts of football: the misplaced passes, the numerous offsides, niggly challenges, aimless free kicks and wayward opportunities.

COME BY

Furthermore, with muted crowd noise and no commentary, the on-pitch player voices are more in keeping with *One Man And His Dog* than with The Greatest Show On Earth.

Football games have arguably reached a plateau, and elements such as atmosphere are becoming increasingly important.

The penalty system is a fairly haphazard affair, and is among the worst we've seen.

A replay of goalkeeper Gordon Banks scoring a goal, having run the length of the field. We kid you not.

Is it red? The boy David up to no good again.

The free-kick system works almost like a golf game – and the less said about it the better.

Through the magic of time travel, the charismatic Trevor Francis squares up to Charlie Nicholas. Note the authentic kits, Panini fans.

For those who were there, footage of the last World Cup can still raise hackles on the back of the neck. Unfortunately, *Viva* is unlikely to rekindle such memories. But if you relish frustration, enjoy low-scoring matches and have an unhealthy interest in the history of the World Cup, this game might be worth shoplifting. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

🔺 **UPPERS** Excellent historical aspect • Football, not soccer

🔻 **DOWNERS** Awkward control system • Moribund atmosphere

66

The result is a home defeat

An array of elaborate celebrations can be implemented via the joypad.

MACHINES

⭐ £39.99 • Acclaim • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM
WE SAY In the bigger firefights you need more beef – a Pentium II and a decent (8Mb+) 3D card will do the trick

PCZONE RECOMMENDED The current obsession with 3D graphics means that few genres are safe from the ravages of polygon excess, and the real-time strategy genre is no exception. To date, most RTS games have been angled more towards action than strategy. *Machines*, however, takes the switchable overhead and first-person camera views of *Battlezone* (PCZ #62, 81%), but the gameplay is pitched firmly in the *Total Annihilation* (PCZ #70, 93%) camp.

It won't come as much of a surprise to learn that the game is about managing resources and crushing enemies. The raw minerals, though, must be found by little locator droids before they can be extracted. Once the droids have established where the goodies are, it's business as usual – build a mine, and transporters to ferry the stuff to your seed pod where it can be turned into BMUs (Building Material Units), and you're in business.

In addition to the regular base structures, you can build military and civilian research centres to upgrade the available technology. There are more than 25 weapons to research and build, such as plasma rifles, napalm ion cannons, big fat nukes and other useful means inflicting death and destruction.

As you'd expect in this accelerated age, the graphics are fast and smooth. Although the undulating terrain is fairly featureless, the units are nicely animated, and firefights are a glorious blaze of lasers and pyrotechnics.

Acclaim have paid attention to some of the glaring AI faults that have plagued more established RTS classics. In *Red Alert* (PCZ #47, 94%), for example, one side of your base could be under heavy attack while a troop of your tanks lazed unaware on the other side. The machines in *Machines*, however, recognise when nearby friendlies are under fire, and can come galloping/crawling to the rescue. The true 3D terrain also enables you to indulge in some cool ambush and stealth tactics.

Machines is not completely fault-free though. The overhead view camera can't really pull out far enough, so you often feel a bit too close to direct the action. The true-perspective 3D (ie things get smaller the further away they are) also means that it's easy to get more distant units confused.

Nevertheless, *Machines* is an involving addition to the burgeoning 3D RTS field. And though not quite as good as *Warzone 2100* (PCZ #75, 90%) it is a solid, satisfying game. Still, you can't help feeling that you've seen it all before.

Matthew Burgess

PCZVERDICT 82%

"I remember when all this was nice and flat…"

You can play the game without a 3D card, but it won't look anything like this.
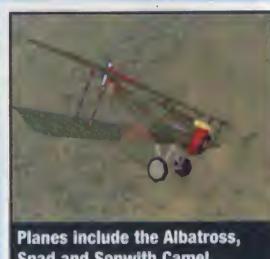
DAWN OF ACES

⭐ £Currently free beta • I-Magic Online • Out now

TECH SPECS   **ONLINE ONLY**

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium 133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 32Mb, Pentium II or higher, analogue joystick and D3D card recommended

While there has been a veritable feast of WWII flight sims available for the PC, the WWI arena has been relatively ignored. Apart from *Red Baron I* and *II* (PCZ #63, 60%) and *Dawn Patrol* (PCZ #49, 70%) there have been few other WWI releases in living memory.

However, this is about to change with the launch of I-Magic Online's *Dawn Of Aces*. *Warbirds*, Interactive Magic's successful long-running WWII combat flight sim, now boasts over 50 planes and 250 'live' players in the same arena at any one time. By simply 'porting' the game engine, modifying the graphics to mirror WWI and generally following the same tack, Interactive Magic are hoping to repeat the same success with *Dawn Of Aces*.

Although this sounds good in theory, it hasn't quite worked out that way. So far. In fairness, the main fault of *Warbirds* – the fact that there was no off-line practice available – has been addressed here, and *Dawn Of Aces* has a number of scenarios designed for just that purpose. Online though, the game lacks that certain something that made *Warbirds* such an amazing experience to play. It's probably down to the fact that WWI flight sims are actually a lot slower than their WWII counterparts, and therefore the action isn't quite as adrenalin-fuelled. Graphically it's not much to look at either, although the 3D/flight modelling is more than acceptable, and the sound effects are very authentic.

In addition to the famous (and infamous) planes of the WWI – such as the Albatross, Spad and Sopwith Camel – you can also fly a Zeppelin bomber, or use a spotter aircraft to call in an artillery strike on an airfield. The Zeppelin carries a huge bomb load and has more guns than a PLO training camp, but it takes almost two whole hours to get the thing in the air and to where the combat is!

Despite these flaws, as a free beta (at the moment, anyway) *Dawn Of Aces* is definitely worth a look. If you can handle the slow pace you could get quite a bit of fun out of it. When I-Magic Online start charging, however, it could be a different story.

Daniel Emery

PCZVERDICT 69%

Planes include the Albatross, Spad and Sopwith Camel.

Graphically *Dawn Of Aces* is not much to look at.

Pretty tough mushrooms, these.

ARMY MEN 2
⭐ Ubi Soft • £39.99 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** DirectX
WE SAY Can jerk a little on this spec, but not unplayably so

Do you remember the soldiers you used to play with in the back yard? The little plastic ones that would melt when you set fire to them? There was a game about them a few months ago – *Army Men* (*PCZ* #66, 41%), which bombed spectacularly, probably cos it was bloody terrible. Publishers 3DO have taken the rather optimistic step of rush releasing a sequel wherein your diminutive warriors get to scrap over various domestic battlefields (gardens, kitchens etc) as well as the more conventional jungles and airfields of the previous incarnation.

The idea is a fairly good one – imagine *Cannon Fodder* meets *Micro Machines* – but like so many good game ideas it's been well and truly pissed up the wall. The supposedly improved AI is risible (your men require careful shepherding lest they get stuck on the scenery), and the missions are just plain dull. It's also repetitive. Simply put: *Army Men 2* is about as much fun as shitting bowling balls.

Matthew Burgess

PCZVERDICT   **40%**

QUEST FOR GLORY V
⭐ £34.99 • Cendant • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** Yes, that will do it

He's either flying, or just poncing about looking incredibly stupid.

This is a difficult one to call. Having been an admirer for the *QFG* series for some time, I was expecting great things of the latest instalment. The previous titles in the series blended adventure and arcade action elements together seamlessly, and told compelling tales with style and verve.

While the same applies to *QFGV* to some extent, it's doubtful whether anyone will play it long enough to find out where its hidden depths lie. This is mainly down to archaic presentation. *QFGV* doesn't support 3D acceleration, the characters in the game are badly drawn and animated, and some of the voice-overs are so bad that you'll most likely want to turn *all* the speech off just to avoid bumping into them by accident.

Which is a shame, because the game underneath the aesthetically challenged exterior is quite playable, and had the developers given as much thought to the presentation, we would have cheerfully recommended *QFGV* without hesitation. But they didn't. So we haven't.

Chris Anderson

PCZVERDICT   **68%**

That's you, that is. The one with the veiny forearms.

Look: *Quake* with cars. Lovely.

There's even a sniper mode, in which you shoot off individual nostril hairs.

REDLINE
⭐ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 **Memory** 32Mb RAM
WE SAY 64Mb RAM will suit you better

This is the real-world incarnation of one of those "Wouldn't it be good if…" fantasies we have on occasion here at *Zone*. Such as "Wouldn't it be good if someone brought out a game that was a sort of cross between *Carmageddon* and *Quake*, where you could drive vehicles around and then get out and run on foot?" That's something we used to say a lot. Now we don't have to, because that's precisely what *Redline* is.

There's some cockamamie sci-fi storyline underpinning the whole thing, the gist of which is that you (yes, you) are an ambitious tough nut in a *Mad Max*-style post-apocalyptic nightmare world. Your mission: to become the hardest man in town (in a thuggish kind of way; not a sexually aroused kind of way, which would be a different game entirely). The game proper is split into a series of ten sprawling missions, each packed with plenty of excuses for high-speed vehicular combat and 'lone gunman' wandering-through-corridors action. And it's not bad.

Not bad, but not quite a classic either. The problem is that *Redline* tries to be a jack of two trades and doesn't quite master either of them. What you want is a combination of *Carmageddon II* and *Half-Life; w*hat you get is more like *Interstate 76* blended with *Duke Nukem 3D*: a mixture of slightly-past-their-prime games. Although admirable in concept, it never quite turns into the white-knuckle, thrill-a-second fun-fest you keep hoping it will.

That spot of whinging aside, the game itself *is* consistently entertaining. It's got jokes (some of which are genuinely funny), it's got decent 3D card-only visuals, and it makes a fair stab at storytelling. Oh, and there's an online multiplay facility too. All in all, then, a valiant attempt but not quite valiant enough. *Redline 2* should rock bells though.

Charlie Brooker

PCZVERDICT   **79%** ➔

throttle it

superbike world championship pc cd-rom

Don your leathers and experience the most realistic and exhilarating racing sim yet with the only officially licensed game of the Superbike World Championship. Featuring totally accurate bike physics and authentic racing circuits and riders, this is a game to test even the most experienced biker.

EA SPORTS **SUPERBIKE** *WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP*

SBK SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

JAZZ JACKRABBIT 2: THE SECRET FILES

◯ Project 2 Interactive • £19.99 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Direct Draw-compatible video card
WE SAY Works fine at this spec, though you lose some of the swish graphical backgrounds

Touch the 'magic' smoke rings and the controls go funny.

Take a gander at the screenshot. Now check the date. That's right: a 2D platform game in 1999. *Jazz Jackrabbit* was a shareware contemporary of *Duke Nukem* back in the days when VGA rather than 3Dfx was the graphical benchmark of choice. Unlike Duke though, Jazz stayed true to his roots (man), and the result is actually a rather compelling and playable platformer, updated, cheaper and now with a host of new levels.

Jazz 2 (original version reviewed in *PCZ* #75) doesn't scale the heights of the peerless Nintendo Mario games, preferring instead to unashamedly 'take on' Sega's almost-as-good *Sonic The Hedgehog*. Nothing wrong with that though, and the tried-and-tested gameplay mechanics deliver that 'just one more go' feeling far more effectively than many MIP-mapped polygon fests available today. Sure, it's not going to displace the *Half-Life*s (or indeed the *Mario*s) of this world from their place in your fumbling, sweaty-palmed affections, but *The Secret Files* is cheap, colourful and, most of all, fun. And that's what games are all about. Aren't they?

Matt Burgess

PC2VERDICT   **70%**
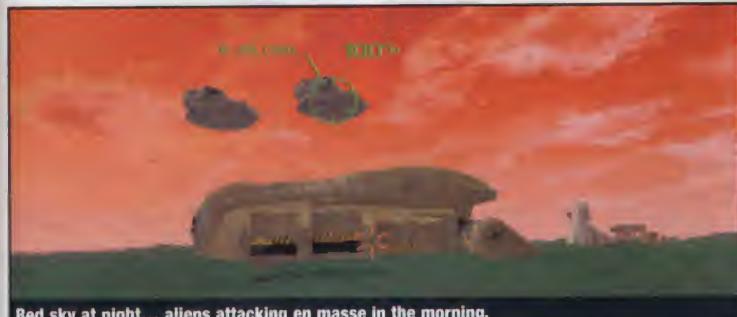
Red sky at night… aliens attacking en masse in the morning.

THUNDER BRIGADE

◯ Interactive Magic • £29.99 • Out Now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P100 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** It's poetry in motion on a P200 with 64Mb, and you don't need a 3D card

Despite being an out and out 3D shoot 'em up, *Thunder Brigade* adopts a voxel-based graphics engine that makes a good argument for the return of yesterday's technology.

The 30-mission war sees you piloting a futuristic hovercraft, battling it out with two alien factions over beautifully realised landscapes in scenes reminiscent of *Battlezone* (*PCZ* #67, 86%). Unfortunately, while your craft is responsive, its ultra-manoeuvrability makes targeting a nightmare. This, coupled with the fact that multiple hits are required to take out even the weakest of foes, leads to a degree of frustration that's exacerbated by the maladjusted difficulty curve. The solo 'seek and destroy' missions are kamikaze affairs – you often seem overwhelmed and outgunned – but the 'protect and supply' scenarios reduce you to an almost invulnerable spectator while your computer-controlled allies kick alien butt. Either way you hardly ever feel in control, and even action junkies will desert this game long before the war is over.

Craig Vaughan

PC2VERDICT   **60%**
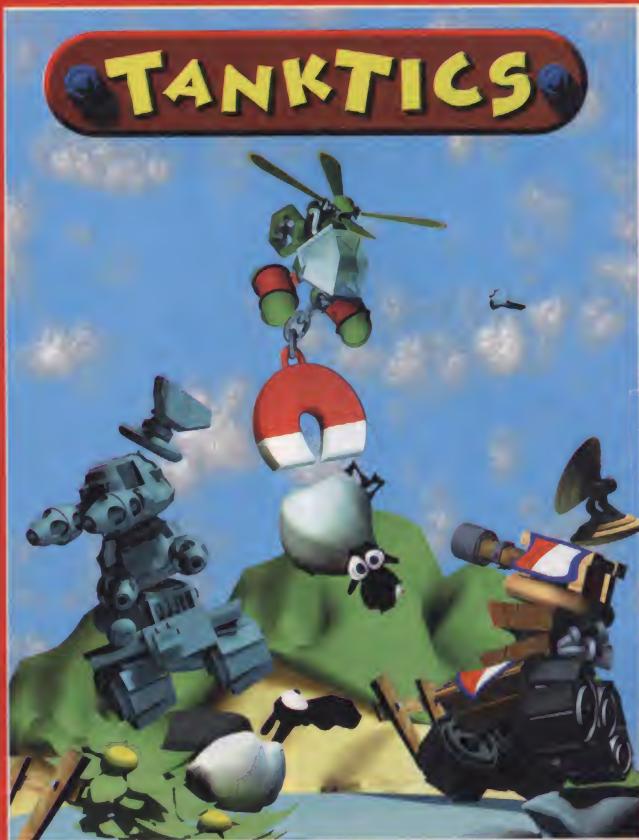
BUDGET ZONE

If you're on the hunt for quality re-releases repackaged for between a fiver and 15 quid, start by taking a look at some of the games people played when the 486 was king

⭐ **PENNY PINCHER** Jeremy Wells
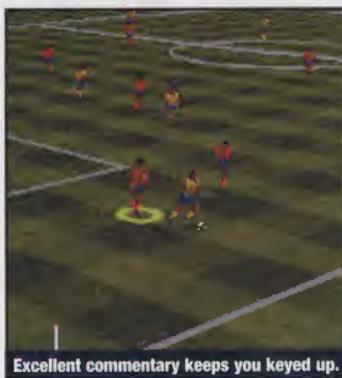
Excellent commentary keeps you keyed up.

A game worthy of a fiver.

You rarely score from inside the box.

Actua Soccer represents the hard and fast English game.

There aren't any 'skill' moves to speak of, but that also applies to Actua Soccer 3.
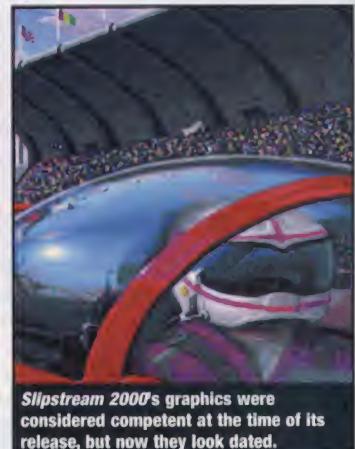
Slipstream 2000's graphics were considered competent at the time of its release, but now they look dated.
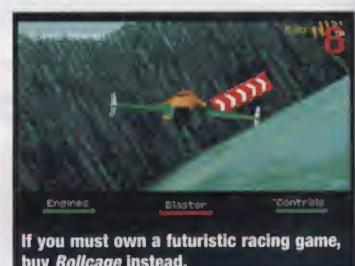
If you must own a futuristic racing game, buy Rollcage instead.

SLIPSTREAM 2000

⭐ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium **Memory** 8Mb RAM

While *Slipstream 2000* did have its good points – it looked pretty good, and the frame rate was pretty impressive considering the system requirements – it lacked that raw 'burn rubber' quality that came as standard with other racing games of the time, such as *Screamer* (*PCZ* #49, 80%) and *Need For Speed* (*PCZ* #31, 89%).

Racing games involving futuristic vehicles that hover instead of powersliding through a hairpin have never had the same appeal as those with four-wheeled cars – *WipEout* (*PCZ* #34, 78%) withstanding.

A few years on and *Slipstream 2000* is looking rather tired and unappealing, and there's little sensation of speed. If you want to race a supersonic wedge of cheese crossed with something from Tracy Island, buy *WipEout* or *Rollcage*. If you want a budget-priced racing game that's got bucketloads of gameplay, buy *Screamer* instead of *Slipstream 2000*.

ACTUA SOCCER

⭐ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486/Pentium **Memory** 8Mb RAM

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

First there was EA Sports' *FIFA Soccer*, then along came Gremlin Interactive's *Actua Soccer* – and, lo, there was an alternative. Some traditionalists may have continued to sing the virtues of *Sensible Soccer*, but who wanted to play an inferior PC version of an ageing Amiga classic? Like *FIFA*, *Actua Soccer* had 3D graphics to die for and was incredibly fast to boot. While the artificial intelligence at times left a lot to be desired, and

the goalkeepers had even less of a brain than David James, the sheer speed, range of passing and superb commentary from TV's Barry Davis made *Actua* an awesome two-player game.

A lack of 'skill' moves, coupled with the inability to score from inside the six-yard box, are two 'quirks' in this original that still plague the third, latest version (now available for £29.99). But, if you're bored with *FIFA* and want to try something a bit different, then *Actua Soccer* is worth five quid of anyone's money.

PCZVERDICT 80%

PCZVERDICT 40%

Play *Links 386* on a Pentium and you won't be left twiddling your thumbs waiting for the graphics to update.

The 'click-click' swing control method may seem a little outdated and simplistic to those who've played a few rounds on some of the latest golf simulations.

LINKS 386 CD
✪ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486/Pentium **Memory** 8Mb RAM

Just as there were those who preferred *FIFA Soccer* to *Actua Soccer*, there were those who preferred EA's *PGA Tour Golf* games to *Links*. Purists will shudder at the next few words, but to all intents and purposes there was never much between them. Where *Links* might have taken slightly longer in some instances, the fact that most people are probably going to play this game on a Pentium with stacks of RAM makes this criticism rather invalid nowadays. However, the mouse 'swing' control method found on more recent golf sims is a worthwhile innovation, and some may find *Links'* standard 'click-click' swing method restrictive. With this in mind, it's hard to recommend it, but at this price it shouldn't be ignored altogether.

PCZVERDICT   75%

Retro platform fun for a fiver.

Nintendo had Mario, Sega had Sonic, and the PC and Amiga had Zool.

ZOOL 2
✪ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium **Memory** 8Mb RAM

Okay, you don't really need a Pentium processor to play *Zool 2*, just as you can play most of the games in the Sold Out range on a steam-powered 486. But how many people who use their PC to play games still have a 486SX-25 with 4Mb RAM sitting in the corner of their room? Despite his appearance, Zool isn't an ant, but a crazy, ninja-skilled, platform-hopping maniac who entertained computer games players at a time when their console-hugging chums were harping on about Mario and Sonic. Although the PC wasn't particularly adept at side-scrolling platform games, *Zool* was a competent effort that held its own and garnered a large following. As with other games in the Sold Out range, it looks distinctly dated, but if you're after a platform game to play on your PC, then this is as good as most.

PCZVERDICT   65%

Graphically, *Sega Rally* still cuts the mustard.

Both *Screamer Rally* and the excellent *Colin McRae Rally* have more to offer in the long term.

SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
✪ £14.99 • Sega PC Collection • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM

When *Sega Rally* first appeared in the arcades, there were few people who did not admit to being totally under its spell. Superb, in-yer-face graphics coupled with super-slidey realistic handling made it the driving game of choice for boy racers across the country.

Unfortunately, a fair bit was lost in the PC conversion, and the general consensus was that it was better suited to the arcades than it was to the PC screen. *Screamer Rally* (*PCZ* #57, 91%) and *Colin McRae Rally* (*PCZ* #68, 93%) have more to offer in the long term, and even if you want a quick half-hour blast in your lunch break or want to use it as a post-pub reaction tester, you'd be better off buying the budget version of *Screamer* instead.

PCZVERDICT   55%

The artificial intelligence is at best frustrating, and the keepers are just plain annoying.

The graphics just aren't in the same league as those of its footie stablemates.

SEGA WORLD WIDE SOCCER
✪ £14.99 • Sega PC Collection • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM (NB: optimised for MMX)

When it comes to footie games on the PC, you really are spoilt for choice. And while *Sega World Wide Soccer* may have been well-received by console owners when it was released a couple of years ago, it just can't compete with the likes of *FIFA* or *Actua Soccer*. In fact, the polygon graphics look rather poor, even when held up against the original *Actua Soccer*. And although the game has plenty of features, including six different playing modes, four different camera angles and a rather nifty 360-degree replay feature, at ten quid dearer it's not exactly what you'd call a bargain. Of course, it's not all about graphics. Unfortunately, *Sega World Wide Soccer* suffers from poor artificial intelligence, and questionable keepers in particular. Nuff said?

PCZVERDICT   30%

FEEDBACK

Got something to say about our reviews? Then say it. Fending off the criticism: *Keith Pullin*

> **If Black Isle can create a multi-player version along the lines of *Ultima*, and recreate as much of the Forgotten Realms as they can, then *Baldur's Gate* will rule the Web**
>
> JA CRAVEN

SIN

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 91%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "The sheer variety of levels is particularly impressive, ranging from vast outdoor arenas to claustrophobic underground affairs."

What you think

☺ "Okay, who's having a laugh, then? In nine years of gaming I have never come across a more difficult piece of software. Three (count 'em) patches totalling 33Mb of code, and the game still doesn't work properly. Intermittent sound effects, sudden crashes, unbelievably long loading times. What a mash-up of a game. How did this get into the shops? Activision should be ashamed. I want my money back!"

Stoo Lawrence

Comment

Well you'd better start busking then – it's the only way you're going to see your dosh again.

HALF-LIFE

REVIEWED Issue 71, Xmas
SCORE 95%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "The *Quake* engine has been stretched to the limit and *Half-Life* has something for everyone."

What you think

☺ "How could you rate *Quake II* over *Half-Life*? You've been going on about how it's the greatest game ever, and then you rate it under *Quake II*, which is crap. Why? *Half-Life* is the king, the greatest 3D shooter ever. As one reader said before: 'It's ethnologically brilliant!' whatever that means. I'm sure it's a compliment, so change your rating, it's wrong."

Hale Family

☺ "How come everyone praises the AI? The only intelligent creatures are human enemies, and they die easily. Aliens just run away without killing you (that's not intelligence, it's cowardice), and your allies are dumb – they

don't shoot until it's too late. Compare it to *Quake II* – do any of *Half-Life's* monsters duck, jump, or run from side to side? Re-evaluate the AI, it's not that good."

The Tingler

Comment

What about *Half-Life's* amazing ninja women? Did you blink when they made their appearance? We reckon they are controlled by some of the best AI around. And the way the soldiers work in teams – did you miss all that? *Half-Life's* AI far surpasses *Quake II's*, and if you think anything different you're sadly deluded.

DELTA FORCE

REVIEWED Issue 74, March
SCORE 66%

What we thought

"It just isn't detailed enough to appeal for long, either as a heavyweight sim or as an engaging arcade romp."

What you think

☺ "I think you were a little unfair on this game. I would have pushed the score up by about 10 per cent. The game comes alive via its online features, particularly the modem/modem game. Watching your chum's back as he sprints for a building is great fun. The best multiplayer game for ages, in my opinion."

Stoo Lawrence

Comment

Remember, not everybody has a modem, so we have to assume the single-player game is going to be most people's first choice. And as you must know, the single-player game is not entirely engaging.

BALDUR'S GATE

REVIEWED Issue 73, February
SCORE 85%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "*Baldur's Gate* is a very competent game that has weeks of addictive gameplay in store for those willing to spend enough time with it to appreciate its hidden depths."

What you think

☺ "While you mentioned the fact that *Baldur's Gate* used the AD&D rules, I don't think you quite realised how important this was to hundreds of thousands of players. The fact that it uses the Forgotten Realms setting is a double bonus for someone who wasted an entire childhood playing AD&D using the boxed set.

If Black Isle can create a multiplayer version along the lines of *Ultima*, and recreate as much of the Forgotten Realms as they can, then *Baldur's Gate* will rule the Web.

In short, your review was wide of the mark; it is definitely a

long-awaited, and much appreciated classic."

J A Craven

Comment

Is 85 per cent a bad mark? Did we massively underrate *Baldur's Gate*? We felt we were more than fair towards a game with limited mainstream appeal. Read the Supertest on page 108, then get back to us.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

REVIEWED Issue 73, February
SCORE 93%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "Having spent the last two weeks playing this game solidly, I can confirm that: a) I'm completely hooked, and b) i will never look at *CM 97/98* again. And that's good enough for me."

What you think

☺ "It was certainly worth the months and months of waiting and the seemingly endless setbacks of the release. The mother of all football management games is back, and now it's better than ever!"

Lee McGovern

☺ "I have played the *CM* games to death, but for some reason *CM3* bores me. I don't like it. I am very disappointed. After all the rave reviews, I feel a little cheated. I've bought many games ➤

Delta Force: the single-player game is not the best, although it might be okay if you've a modem.

and felt this way, but I never expected it with *CM3*."

Steve Williams

Comment
Boring? Maybe you should try coaching a team other than Everton?

RETURN TO KRONDOR

REVIEWED Issue 76, May
SCORE 80%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "This potentially excellent game is let down by a number of niggly problems... If you're the patient type though, you may just warm to it."

What you think

✪ "It would have been better off called *Return To Retailer*. It may have been five years in the making, but it was only 20 hours in the playing, and that was with the difficulty set to 'hard'. *King's Quest: Mask Of Eternity* is far superior. If your readers must choose between these two, choose the latter."

Colin Rodgers

Comment
Return To Krondor is certainly not a bad game; in fact it possesses some highly innovative ideas, which is precisely why we gave it the mark we did. Any game that attempts to breathe new life into a tired genre deserves some kind of praise. We agree that *Mask Of Eternity* (which was far from perfect) is a better game, which is why we reflected that in our scoring (*MOE* got 89 per cent, remember).

NBA LIVE 99

REVIEWED Issue 73, February
SCORE 87%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "EA Sports' quality control has prevailed, and *NBA Live 99* plays like a proverbial dream."

What you think

✪ "This has to be one of the best sports games I have ever played in my life. Why didn't it get a Classic rating? I know that 87 per cent is a good score, but the game is just in a world of its own. I couldn't believe what my Voodoo2 card was giving me – every single player's face was modelled to near-perfection. The gameplay is terrific too. This is the best basketball game out."

Nil to Skill

Comment
Any game featuring lanky Yanky freaks squeaking around in high-fashion training pumps is going to have to be bloody good to get a *PC ZONE* Classic rating. The trouble with basketball simulations is that they tend to have questionable life spans, and *NBA Live 99* is no exception.

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

REVIEWED Issue 74, March
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "It's a damn sight more impressive than most of the blockbusters out there. In fact it's hard to convey just how intrinsically satisfying it is to play – it's as moreish as popping your way through a huge sheet of bubble-wrap."

What you think

✪ "This has to be one of the most addictive games I have played. It's great. I couldn't put it down. The 'Wormnet' Internet feature is really easy to use, even for me. Sign up, log in, and you're playing in five minutes flat. Why can't other online games be this simple? The sounds are good fun too, especially the ones you download from the Internet. If you haven't got *Worms 2* and you just want raw playability, I recommend this heartily."

Paul Bettridge

Comment
That's what we like to see: a very happy gamesplayer.

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

REVIEWED Issue 72, January
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "*Thief* is a bloody good game. If you can live with the overabundance of rotting undead, you're in for a treat."

What you think

✪ "This game is tense – very tense – and very hard. But even so, it's so nice to have a breath of fresh air pumped into the FPS genre. *Thief* made me examine every pixel, appreciating the time and effort these programmers put into making it. I demand a sequel, and I'm not leaving until I get one.

Chaotic Newt

Comment
You'll have to leave eventually – you can't stay huddled over by our fax machine forever.

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

REVIEWED Issue 75, April
SCORE 87%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "And you thought Chocolate Hobnobs were addictive. Say hello to *Rollercoaster Tycoon*, one of those games that appeals to the same part of your brain that makes you want to chew gum or smoke cigarettes."

What you think

✪ "*Rollercoaster Tycoon* has to be the biggest pile of pants ever. It is utterly awful. Once you have a large number of guests (1,000+) and a few roller coasters in your park, the game pauses every second as it attempts to work out what's happening – even on a PII 333 with 128Mb RAM. If it struggles with that, then what hope is there for people with lesser computers?"

Dan Dyson

Comment
Thankfully, most even-minded critics concentrate on the game's powerful addictive qualities and sublime

South Park: best to stick to watching it on the box.

SOUTH PARK

REVIEWED Issue 76, May
SCORE 65%

What we thought

"Mutant turkeys, drooling morons, piss-soaked snowballs, farting dolls and profane language all feature heavily in this relentless 3D shoot 'em up of ill repute, and, rather sadly, the end result is somewhat hard to like and difficult to recommend."

What you think

✪ "A few quotes from the show and some snowball-throwing just does not cut it. *South Park* now sits on my shelf gathering dust. Please be a bit more cautious about what you rave over in future, as some poor unfortunate may end up buying the damn thing."

Ian Usher

Comment
If you think 65 per cent is 'raving', we'd hate to think what 95 per cent constitutes. Ian, you might have your wires crossed (as well as your eyes). Perhaps you read that 'rave' review somewhere else?

gameplay, rather than on exaggerated slow-down claims such as yours. Maybe you need to optimise your PC or get it set up properly. We didn't have any slow-down problems here.

SIMCITY 3000

REVIEWED Issue 74, March
SCORE 92%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "The graphics are impressive – you can zoom right in and see every sim running about their daily business."

What you think

✪ "What a waste of money! This is a reworking of *SC2000* but without the best bits. No longer can you design your map the way *you* want it; you can't rename buildings; no arcologies; and no labels (well *I* liked them anyway). One of the main reasons I bought this game was for the Building Architect Tool (BAT), which we were told could be downloaded from the *SimCity* website. Well guess what? It's not there. I have lost all hope for Maxis as a

respected developer, and I wouldn't be surprised if the BAT never turned up.

Chaos Newt

Comment
We have been assured the BAT will turn up. Meanwhile, stop wallowing in nostalgia and play the game for what it is.

VIPER RACING

REVIEWED Issue 73, February
SCORE 80%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "Wheels buckle, headlights smash, and when you finally get the car back on the road it drives like a plate of spaghetti."

What you think

✪ "This is a racing game that developers should learn from, but not because of its great graphics, excellent AI, or easy-to-use menus. The best thing about *Viper Racing* is its learning curve."

Gary Dalinson

Comment
Yeah, but who wants to learn how to drive a plate of spaghetti?

NBA Live 99: great, but how long's its life-span?

Baldur's Gate

Diablo

Fallout 2

© **PHOTOGRAPHY** Phil Ward **VENUE** The Playing Fields

PCZ**SUPERTEST**
ROLE-PLAYI

Final Fantasy VII

Lands Of Lore III

The promise of beer and food is once again enough to assemble *PC ZONE*'s gaming elite, this time to discuss role-playing games. Breaking up the fights: *Paul Mallinson*

NG GAMES

E xtending beyond the influence of the traditional adventure game, and sometimes found casually dipping its toe into action/strategy/ resource management territory, the role-playing game (RPG) is considered by many to be the domain of socially inadequate individuals. It was refreshing to see this theory bumped to one side by the recent release of Interplay's *Baldur's Gate* – a traditional RPG in every sense, and one that sat at the top the UK charts for most of January this year.

RPGs seem to appeal to all kinds of people, but for many different reasons. Some detest the traditional fantasy coating in which most RPGs seem to come shrink-wrapped, whereas others lap it up. However, look beyond face value and you find that most good RPGs offer real depth, as well as a decent story to keep you gripped. Character building, stats, experience points, and sometimes that dreaded term 'dice-rolling' all play a part in the make-up of your average RPG, and it is this inherent detail that often proves most compelling.

⬆ L to R: Chris Anderson reviewed *Baldur's Gate* (PCZ #73, 85%) ✪ Daniel Emery (*PC ZONE*'s coverdisc editor, incidentally) is a long-time RPG nut ✪ Charlie Brooker reviewed *Fallout 2* (*PCZ* #71, 86%) and *Final Fantasy VII* (*PCZ* #66, 93%) ✪ Paul Mallinson reviewed *Lands Of Lore III* (*PCZ* #74, 90%) ✪ David McCandless reviewed *Ultima Underworld II* way back in *PC ZONE* issue #1 ✪ Richie Shoemaker didn't review any of the games here, but he's a seasoned RPG fiend, so we won't hold that against him.

Here at *PC ZONE* we've mocked the 'orcs and goblins' aspect of the traditional RPG in the past, although some of us have spent months, nay years, fighting said creatures in the darkness of our gag-inducing bedrooms without revealing the fact to our friends. So now we're here to redress the balance. This frank and open discussion was held in order to decide which RPG available to buy for the PC is currently the best.

First off we had to decide on a shortlist. After all, we can't test every RPG ever released, can we? So we chose five contemporary titles that rocked serious bells when we first got hold of them. Most were classics at the time, but how they fare now is open for discussion. Which is exactly what we're here for…

BALDUR'S GATE

Chris: Excellent game. It has everything you'd expect from a good RPG, and what it does it does very well. Really enjoyable. The only problem I had was that I didn't see anything in it that I hadn't already seen before.
Mallo: It's AD&D, isn't it?
Chris: It's AD&D, but you don't really see that unless you play AD&D board games, which I don't. It's big selling point was that whether you had played traditional board games or not, you could still play *Baldur's Gate*.
Mallo: But TSR's AD&D is huge.
Chris: It *is* huge, but there are a lot of people out there who play

RPGs that don't give a shit about AD&D – and I'm one of them. In terms of transition, though, I can't really comment because I haven't played the board games.
Mallo: One thing I do appreciate about AD&D, which runs through into *Baldur's Gate* – and also those old TSR games that SSI used to do, like *Ravenloft* and that kind of thing – is the artwork that has already been created for the campaign books and novels. It's fantastic. Real quality art. *Baldur's Gate* is Forgotten Realms, isn't it?
Everyone: Yes.
Mallo: Well, the artwork that they've used in the game translates brilliantly from the books. As a result, *Baldur's Gate* looks like *such* a slick game. The character portraits are immaculately painted – better drawn than most other RPG art these days – and that's what I appreciate about AD&D.
Chris: I'm sure that if you knew the background to the world in which the game is based in…
Mallo: I don't though. I don't play traditional RPGs, but I can see the difference in quality between these graphics and those of many other PC RPGs.
Macca: Can I ask – and this is something a lot of role-playing games lack – but does it have a sense of humour? Is it able to laugh at itself? Does it make jokes? Do the characters have some kind of personality beyond the kind of po-faced "I Thargandia, son of Thorgungos" rubbish?
Mallo: Do you like role-playing games

Macca?
Macca: I do, but I'll tell you what I don't like about role-playing games. I don't like orcs. I don't like men with their shirts stripped down to their waists with their nipples showing.
Mallo: You say that, but why?
Macca: Because at the heart of most role-playing games is one

[image of person]

big, fat cliché – and that name is JRR Tolkien.
Mallo: What do you like about RPGs, then?
Macca: Good RPGs make you feel as though you're somewhere else. They engross you by creating a whole world that you can interact with – characters, quests, conversations.
Mallo: *Lands Of Lore III* is quite self-deprecating, which was unexpected, but I'd say *Baldur's Gate* is played quite straight.
Dan: There are some humour aspects in *Baldur's Gate*, but not many, and they get really repetitive after a while. Like the bloke with the mouse in his pocket, which is funny for the first ten seconds but…
Chris: Some of the funniest moments in *Baldur's Gate* were probably unintentional. Probably

because it took itself so seriously. But we shouldn't single out *Baldur's Gate* for that because most RPGs are like that.
Mallo: That generic kind of fantasy setting.
Macca: Boring.
Mallo: It works, though.
Richie: It's been so long since we had something like that. Okay, so

> **"At the heart of most role-playing games is one big, fat cliché – and that name is JRR Tolkien"**
>
> MACCA ON *BALDUR'S GATE*

it's derivative of the whole genre – it's old-skool – but what it does it does exceedingly well.
Charlie: I wrote a preview of it, and played it quite a bit, but the people who used to buy RPGs put me off. When I worked in a computer games shop, the sort of people who used to come in to buy those really hard-core RPGs were…
Macca: Were they all fat?
Charlie: Yeah. And they stank. Basically they were largely objectionable.
Macca: Socially inadequate.
Charlie: Maybe I'm scarred by that, but 'beardy weirdy' role-playing games do put me off. The same sort of people also seemed to be into flight sims, and war games, and that kind of masturbatory fantasy.
Macca: My dad is into flight sims.
Mallo: Well that proves the point.
Macca: People want real-life

locations these days, not orcs and goblins. Players want realism.
Charlie: Most people buy RPGs because they like that type of game. You could set those games in a more realistic environment and still have the mass appeal.
Macca: I want more *System Shock*.
Mallo: But that was a fantasy 'cyberpunk' RPG.
Macca: Cyberpunk is more realistic than orcs and goblins.
Mallo: So what you're saying is that something like *Lands Of Lore III* would be so much better if it was set in a realistic environment, and not fantasy?
Charlie: If they shaved off all the beards and shooed all the green monsters out and put the leather in the bin…
Mallo: So not orcs and goblins for you, Charlie?
Charlie: No orcs and goblins. Mutants I can take. For some reason I can turn a blind eye to mutants.
Mallo: I was impressed by the presentation, by the interface… I was a little bit pissed off by the scrolling. It was far too slow and jerky for me, even on a ninja PC. Chris, did you complete it?
Chris: I did want to complete it, and intended to go back to it, but it doesn't have that 'X' factor that makes you go back to things.
Dan: I've played the whole thing right through to the end.
Mallo: The whole thing?
Dan: Yeah – sad bastard. Took about two and a half weeks. A lot of nights.
Macca: Did you sleep under your desk again?
Dan: Yeah. Thing is, the ending is a bit of an anticlimax. I sat there thinking "Is that it?!"
Macca: You should get topless women after spending that much time playing a game! If I'm spending two and half weeks on a game, I want some return for my investment.
Mallo: What, free passwords for 'triple-X' porn sites?
Macca: Yeah!
Dan: Unfortunately, all you get in *Baldur's Gate* is 'happily ever after'.
Mallo: Do you reckon developers Black Isle have a future in RPGs?
Dan: I hope so. I've not seen anything else from them before, and if this is what they've started out with, then they can only go on to better things. The game itself is fantastic and it's gained a lot of popularity on the Internet.
Chris: Did you agree with my review, or did you think it should have been a *PC ZONE* Classic?
Dan: The review was fine, but

BALDUR'S GATE

This massive game (apparently over 10,000 screens in size) is an RPG purist's dream, replete with every spell and monster from the famous campaign setting. A new add-on, *Tales Of The Sword Coast* (see review on page 91), makes it an exciting prospect for anyone looking for a role-playing game with depth.

SCORE	PCZ #73, 85%
DEVELOPER	Black Isle
PUBLISHER	Interplay
PRICE	£39.99

Baldur's Gate: popular with the public, and popular with us.

what do you call a 'classic' game? Is it something that's new and breaks the rules, or is it something derivative that can keep you hooked for weeks and weeks and weeks? In my mind it *is* a classic though.

Mallo: Ooh, controversial.

DIABLO

Charlie: I played the demo of it.

Mallo: That's nice.

Richie: The good thing about *Diablo* is that for the first time it gave action fans the opportunity to play both action and RPG.

Mallo: Not the first time. Nah, there've been other action RPGs in the past.

Richie: Okay, the first time done so well.

Macca: It was good fun in multiplayer, until people started cheating.

Dan: Bored me to tears.

Mallo: Why?

Dan: It was too much of an action game to be a decent RPG, and too much of an RPG to be an action game. It was neither.

Mallo: What do you think it lacked?

Dan: It filled a nice gap, but I'm far more of an RPG person than an action game person, and at the time it was just: "Oh, here we go…" There wasn't much of a story either. You were just some bloke who would run around a dungeon killing things. Can anyone remember anything about the story? I bet not.

Chris: Everyone's gonna say that now. *Diablo* – it's very linear; there's only one village; there are not many people to speak to; you go in, you fight; you go back out again, you fight… Anyone who didn't play *Diablo* when it first came out, and anyone who still hasn't played it who's sitting there wondering what all the fuss is about, I'll tell you: simply the fact that it looked absolutely gorgeous. That's what made me want to play it. There's enough to keep you playing for ages – I couldn't believe the graphics.

Macca: But they could have done all sorts with the characters.

Mallo: The menu system was pretty cool too. It looked very nice and made it easy to get on in the game. This is something we haven't really touched upon yet – the way you organise your character stats and inventory, and the screens and menus that enable you to do that. I've been

DIABLO

Released back in January '97 Blizzard's smash hit blew away the critics with its astounding isometric graphics and uncomplicated gameplay. Nowadays though, even with the comprehensive multiplayer features, *Diablo* looks a little dated. It's still great fun to play and not too expensive, so buying it isn't a mistake.

	PCZ #48, 88%
SCORE	Blizzard
DEVELOPER	Blizzard Classics
PUBLISHER	
PRICE	£19.99

playing *Return To Krondor* a lot recently, and its main flaw is that it has an over-elaborate menu system.

Macca: Most inventory systems are flawed.

Chris: *Baldur's Gate* had a really transparent inventory system, as did *Diablo*.

Mallo: A good RPG should give you a lot of nice things on the way. That's one plus point about *Return To Krondor*.

Dan: Most RPGs give you a lot of junk to cart around, and basically you have to learn what you need to carry and what to leave behind.

Macca: How many people, when they start playing role-playing games, are really scared they're going to miss something? You've got hundreds of rocks in your backpack…

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mallo: Remember in *Dungeon Master* – you'd have 200 pieces of 'melon', sliced from those fungus tree monsters, in your inventory? You used to save them in case you ran out of food, but you never did… *Dungeon Master*, on the Atari ST, was the first RPG that

really sucked me in. You could improve your 'ninja' skills by throwing things, and I would spend hours just throwing pieces of melon from one side of a room to the other in order to bump myself up a level. After 300 throws, the game came up with a message saying "your ninja skill has gone up one point".

Chris: *Ultima Online* is exactly like that, as is *Lands Of Lore II*.

Mallo: But I hate dying in RPGs. I don't like investing all that time in a character and seeing them die, so I do go to some lengths to ensure their survival. Like cheating, by loading in a previous savegame when my character dies in combat.

Macca: *Dungeon Master* was cool. The moment you realised you could kill things using the doors, you thought "Brilliant!" It's like rocket-jumping in *Quake* – they hadn't really anticipated that kind of thing.

Mallo: Yeah, you could lure monsters to a doorway and ram the door up and down onto them repeatedly. The party system was cool too.

Macca: *Dungeon Master* didn't really feel like you were controlling a party.

Mallo: *Eye Of The Beholder* took the party system further.

Macca: But it doesn't work in first-person perspective.

Mallo: No, it worked well in *Dungeon Master*. You had those

four colour-coded characters at the bottom-right of the screen, and you could pick them up and move them around really easily with a click of the mouse.

Macca: Yeah, but you might as well have been a bigger individual rather than four small blokes.

Richie: A big fat guy?

Macca: S'pose.

Chris: We should get back to *Diablo*. At the end of the day it's not a game that you would want to play now.

Mallo: *Diablo II* is, what, three or four months off?

Chris: It's gonna have to be *really* different to be effective. The fact that you could only go into one town and interact with a couple

of characters, who weren't very interesting to interact with anyway, was definitely a downside. Blizzard are really going to have to do something special this time around. The graphics are not going to carry them this time – everyone uses 3D acceleration – so they're going to have to pull out all the stops to impress us. *Ultima Ascension* is probably going to be the one that walks all over everything else.

Mallo: What about randomly

generated dungeons? *Diablo* doesn't have them, but it certainly feels like it does.

Macca: I don't like 'em. It should be you versus the person that designed the game. Designers spend months and months planning loads of traps and little plot turns and twists, and randomly generated dungeons takes away a lot of that magic.

Dan: People like drawing little maps on paper and using them to complete the game. You can't do that with randomly generated dungeons. *Diablo* didn't have random dungeons, but it did have a generic look which didn't do it any favours, despite the wondrous nature of the visuals.

> 66 **It was too much of an action game to be a decent RPG, and too much of an RPG to be an action game** 99
>
> **DAN ON *DIABLO***

Mallo: Have you ever heard of a game called *Dungeon Hack*, from SSI?

Macca: It was rubbish!

Mallo: I played it for months. It was absolutely great.

Macca: Was that randomly generated dungeons? You must have been stoned.

Mallo: It was a natural progression. *Dungeon Hack* was about as far as that kind of 'tile-based' RPG could go. It was like a role-playing fruit machine – you played a different game every time, depending on the 'seed'

Diablo had impressive graphics at the time of its release.

Fallout 2: despite being turn-based it has a legion of fans.

FALLOUT 2

Set in a post-apocalyptic world, you are selected to ascend to leadership of your people. But you must first prove your devotion to them and journey out into the radioactive wastelands. Coarse language, extreme violence and adult situations make Fallout 2 an acquired taste, but once sampled it's hugely fulfilling.

SCORE	86% PCZ #71
DEVELOPER	BioWare
PUBLISHER	Interplay
PRICE	£39.99

← generated at the start of the game. It would've made a good online RPG. Maybe someone should resurrect it?

Macca: I bloody well hope not!
Charlie: So do I. Mallo, can I have a beer please?

FALLOUT 2

Charlie: Fallout 2 is a good game. It's very atmospheric and it's got a nice, evil sense of humour to it too. I know a lot of RPG 'beardy weirdy' games have a sense of humour to them, but it's usually about orcs getting drunk. Or about Thorin sitting down and singing about gold. There's a certain side of me that likes that kind of anal detail you get in games like Fallout. I remember playing Buck Rogers on the Megadrive endlessly when I was a student. I do like a certain level of ponderous detail, like slowly and meticulous getting a band of people to blow the heads off someone… But I only find it acceptable if that anal detail is dressed up in some kind of gritty urban setting.

Macca: But this speaks out to you, Charlie. You watch loads of horror films, you're obsessed with nuclear war, and you like to masturbate furiously…
Everyone: (Guffaw)
Mallo: But isn't Fallout 2 basically an extension of the first game? You even start in the same place in both games.
Charlie: It's not the same game. It's the same engine, but the story's different. A lot of the locations are the same, but you don't play the same character, you play someone 50 years on from the first game.
Charlie: I'm fascinated by the post-apocalyptic setting…
Mallo: You mean you're absolutely petrified by the thought of nuclear war?
Macca: We're all petrified by the thought of nuclear war. We grew up during the Cold War. We watched Threads…
Charlie: Fallout had style.
Mallo: The intro was one of the best I'd ever seen, with the black-and-white TV coverage of the war playing to 1920s music. But I thought the setting was a bit 'forced', in a Logan's Run kind of way.
Charlie: Yeah, but it's no more forced than having to search for the Sacred Dagger of Krangg or whatever. That's what I don't like

about most RPGs, you're always looking for the same stuff! A mirror broken into seven shards.
Mallo: I was impressed, but the thing that pissed me off the most about Fallout was the fact that there was too much non-voiced dialogue; there was too much text to read, most of which wasn't read out to you in the usual husky-voiced manner. I like a mix, but in Fallout there's just too much. The control system is good. The turn-based aspect works well.
Dan: But there's no magic in it.
Mallo: What other truly turn-based RPGs are there out there?
Chris: X-COM.

Mallo: That's not really an RPG though.
Macca: What about those old RPGs from US Gold? Remember those? There were hundreds of them! All turn-based.
Mallo: The Gold Box range? Bloody hell, yeah. Some of them, being AD&D licences, did really well at the time. Wasn't Buck Rogers part of that series?
Macca: But they were all hex-based. Fallout's not far off that kind of thing.

Richie: That's harsh. I really liked Fallout 2, but I preferred Baldur's Gate. As soon as you start playing Baldur's Gate you're right in there, but with Fallout there's so much to read and do before you get into it. There's a huge manual, and you're looking things up all the time – what this means and what that means, and whether you should develop this over that…
Mallo: I got away without using the manual for a while.
Chris: Richie is just not very clever.
Mallo: Having said that, I did spend my first few hours completely confused. The map bit, for example, with those green

> **There's a certain side of me that likes that kind of anal detail you get in games like Fallout**
> CHARLIE ON FALLOUT 2

triangles that you travel to – that's where I found myself picking up the manual. And it isn't a brilliant manual either. I was also killed on more than one occasion, and had to start all over again.
Richie: The random combat was a pain in the arse.
Mallo: Like having to run the gauntlet with those bloody rats at the beginning of the game. Damn things. You could just stamp on them in real life…
Dan: It was bollocks.
Mallo: I don't think it was bollocks. Final Fantasy VII has

random combat, and that worked okay.
Dan: But in Final Fantasy you could go back as a super-hard character and kick all the weedy characters that caused you problems earlier. That's the idea – you're not gonna be savaged by the rats any more.
Mallo: That's the thing about RPGs – you might struggle for the first couple of hours because, I dunno, you're being attacked by butterflies and they're killing you, or something pathetic like that.
Dan: If the game is good enough the butterflies should think: "Ah, there's a bloke with a flame-thrower – I'm not going to go and attack him."
Mallo: I haven't seen any killer butterflies in any games…
Richie: If you like RPGs with loads of stats, tons of detail, shedloads of objects and packed full of characters, then Fallout 2 is a great game to get into. It'll take you months to complete it, and it does take a while to get into.
Mallo: Did you finish it?
Richie: No. After a few weeks I got stuck and couldn't be arsed to put in the time to complete it.
Mallo: Would you go back now and play it through?
Richie: Probably not, because I've got a relatively short attention span.
Charlie: What does that make you?

FINAL FANTASY VII

Charlie: Final Fantasy VII is a different kettle of fish to most of the other games here. I can see why it divided people, because it was a skilfully told story, but it was also trite and banal at the same time.
Mallo: The translations were awful.
Macca: I disliked it.
Mallo: I lent you my copy of the PlayStation version and you've still bloody got it!
Macca: Ah, yeah. But I didn't like it. I was completely unable to get into it. I had expectations, but I'd just played Resident Evil 2, and found Final Fantasy VII incomprehensible by comparison. I expected it to present itself to me in a very straightforward way, but in the end I just couldn't be bothered to learn how to play it. Maybe I wasn't in the right frame of mind, but I just found it boring.
Chris: It does take a while to get going, and I almost dropped it because of that.
Mallo: The bit where the game opened up for me, the bit where the penny dropped and I thought "This is a truly excellent game",

is where the story goes back in time in a dream sequence but you still participate in the action. It was totally unexpected. A new sub-plot begins, you go through that, then the dream sequence ends and you're back where you were before, only this time a little bit older and wiser.

Dan: It is still quite a linear game.

Chris: You can't say that. It's got lots of things that other games haven't got, like the sub-games that pop up along the way.

Charlie: Like the squat thrusts.

Chris: Yeah, and they're unexpected the whole time. Normally in games like this you think "Bugger it. I don't know what this is all about; forget all about it", but in *Final Fantasy VII* you spend ages toying with them. Like the Chocobos racing – I spent hours on that just for fun. It's brilliant when you come across things like that that you never expected to find.

Mallo: Ever play *Legend Of The Mystical Ninja* on the Super Nintendo?

Charlie: Even *System Shock* did that. Remember the '*Pong*' game that you could discover?

Mallo: *System Shock* narrowly missed out on being included in this Supertest. It's only because it's deleted and unavailable now that it didn't make it in. And the fact that it's a bitch to get working under Windows 95.

Macca: Never mind. The last third of the game flagged anyhow.

Mallo: Going back to *Final Fantasy VII*, I thought the conversations in the game

really made it. Facing moral dilemmas, ones that affect the flow, really gives you something to think about.

Macca: The first *Ultima Underworld* had that. It had what I'd consider to be quite a witty script. Sure, you'd still encounter the usual suspects – dwarves trapped in dungeons, and that kind of thing – but each one was endowed with a certain sense of character, and this was all in place nearly ten years ago. As far as I can see there's been nothing that's rivalled it, relatively speaking, since then. Even technology-wise it was *miles* ahead of anything at the time. *Doom* came out at the same time, and *Ultima Underworld* just *shat all over* iD's engine. It wasn't as fast, but it was far more complex. They even had curves, and they're only just doing curves in 3D games now.

Mallo: I agree, but the real-time combat let *Ultima Underworld* down to some extent. It was easy to panic and die. You don't expect the combat in *Final Fantasy* to be turn-based when you first play the game, but it works well and is very exciting. The RPGs I've played the most had turn-based combat.

Charlie: The fireworks in *Final Fantasy VII* were a bit over the top though. It strained itself to make the turn-based combat seem visually exciting.

Dan: You're picking small holes in a very big game that is essentially very good. Overall it's fantastic.

Richie: I couldn't believe how low-res and shit the backdrops were! And the dialogue was terrible! But as you go through it, learning the ropes, you realise that the characters are actually very charming. *Final Fantasy VII* is a good game, but if it hadn't been for the whizzy 3D bits it would have looked so crap.

Charlie: The design of the characters themselves was quite

important, and I think Squaresoft got it right.

Richie: But they looked like mini-Lego figures.

Mallo: There are certain bits in *Final Fantasy VII* that make you genuinely sad, like the bit when one of your team dies.

Macca: You mean you cried while playing a game?!

Mallo: No, but it does make you feel sad. I've heard plenty of other people talking about it.

Charlie: The best example I've seen of that is in one of the *Final Fantasy* games on the Gameboy. It

starts off and says "Enter your name", then it says "Enter your best friend's name", and the opening sequence is your best friend dying!

Everyone: *(Laughs)*

Charlie: It's a really cheap way of getting you involved. You do get 'regret' in *Fallout*, but not many heart-wrenching situations. There's a fairly sad bit with a

> **"It's got lots of things that other games haven't got – like the sub-games that pop up along the way"**
>
> CHRIS ON *FINAL FANTASY VII*

bunch of mutants who just want some water from you, and if you do something a bit wrong they end up dying. I did feel a little bit bad about that.

Mallo: *Final Fantasy VII* handles the human aspect very well. It offers you questions that you have to answer. The game, and the way in which other characters react to you, changes depending on which way you answer.

Dan: It wasn't completely open-ended though. There is a zig-zag path through the game, but it's fairly linear. Although *Final Fantasy VII* was a distinct improvement over other RPGs. There was a definite start, middle and end. All RPGs need to have an

ending, otherwise you might as well go and play *SimCity*.

Mallo: What about the party-based play elements in *FFVII*? I thought it worked really well, the way different people joined your plight at intervals during the game.

Charlie: Yeah, it's nice that you can pick people up, walk around with them and use them. If you've got characters working alongside you and they die, you do feel a little bit… upset.

Chris: I still prefer to play one character that you can build up on your own.

Charlie: That's never really appealed to me. When I'm given the option "Do you want to sit here and click on things for ten hours and we'll roll lots of virtual dice and come up with all kinds of attributes for your character?", or "Click here for a pre-made character", and just give it a stupid name – like Mr Cocknutts, or something – then I'll go for the stupid name every time. I'm not interested in developing a character, because I'm quite happy with who I am, thank you very much.

Macca: You can't generate random numbers on a computer.

Chris: I completely agree about the dice-rolling, but you should be able to at least define your character before you start. It depends on how you like to play these games. ➔

Jessie
"Code deciphered"

FINAL FANTASY VII

One of the biggest-selling RPGs of all time. *Final Fantasy VII* is a classic story of love, life, betrayal, regret and the struggle for power in an overtly cartoony Japanese-styled world. Although it has been criticised for its graphics and dialogue, it remains a well-crafted tale, and is full of surprises, sub-games and challenges.

	PCZ #66, 93%
SCORE	
DEVELOPER	Squaresoft
PUBLISHER	Eidos Interactive
PRICE	£49.99

Final Fantasy VII does have slightly ropy visuals, but that's not what it's all about.

THE FUTURE ROLE-PLAYING

The potential is there. Will someone eventually get it right?

One point that was raised during the course of this Supertest was that most of our reviewers thought that the best was yet to come on the PC. One topic of argument was the possibility of the arrival of a game using a top-of-the-range 3D engine, but retaining the depth of a traditional RPG. Chris thought it would be some time before such a game was possible, while Macca and Mallo contested that such a thing was feasible now. GT Interactive's forthcoming *Wheel Of Time* (previewed on page 62), an RPG that uses the *Unreal* engine, could well be the first of a new wave of 'next-generation' RPGs. On top of that we can also look forward to Warren Spector's *Deus Ex*, now being developed by Ion Storm. Warren was the guy responsible for the *Ultima Underworld* series of games, which are highly revered among the ranks of *PC ZONE*. And there's the small matter of *Ultima Ascension*, *Anachronox* and *System Shock 2*. But they're a different story entirely…

Warren Spector's *Deus Ex*.

System Shock returns.

Wheel Of Time: looking good.

Origin's next *Ultima* game.

ROLE OUT THE BARREL

Did we miss out your favourite RPG? There are worse things in life…

The saddest part of this month's Supertest was the discovery that the classic *Ultima Underworld* games are now deleted and unavailable to buy in most places. And that's why we chose to leave them out of the running. Origin's superlative twosome were available as a double pack on one CD some time ago, and you may still find one lurking in a bargain bin somewhere, but getting them to work under Windows 95 is another thing. They deserve a re-release, possibly even with 3D support. How about it, Origin and EA?

Other all-time greats that missed the glare of our spotlight include Gremlin's *Realms Of The Haunting*, *Ultima VII*, *Ravenloft: Stone Prophet* and *Menzoberranzan*, mostly because they're too old. Recent RPGs, bar the ones featured here, were not deemed good enough to warrant inclusion, so *Return To Krondor* and *Silver* got knocked into a cocked hat.

As for the rest, it depends what you call a role-playing game. If you disagree with any of our choices, write in and let us know.

Return To Krondor: flawed.

Ultima Underworld: deleted.

Old: *Ultima VII*.

The original *System Shock*.

DODGY GROUND

Hexx: a load of old cobblers.

Cybermage: made us puke.

The worst role-playing games of all time?

Let's face it, there are crap games in every genre, and the RPG section of your local shop may house its fair share of them. Recent abominations masquerading as role-playing games include Sierra's awful *Betrayal At Antara*, and EA and Origin's *Cybermage* – what *were* they thinking of? Some continental developers still insist on pushing out crusty, god-awful RPGs too – witness the *Ishar* series and *Robinson's Requiem* from those Frenchies down at *Silmarils*, or the blandness of *Albion* from the Germans at Blue Byte. The worst RPG we've ever seen on the PC, though, is the long-forgotten *Hexx: Wizard* from Psygnosis – find the red key for the red door which unlocks the green key for the green door… *Bloody rubbish!*

Charlie: I'd prefer it if there was a dexterity test with the mouse, yeah?
Dan: Other games asked you questions which would define the character you played. Like "You find a sheep, do you shag it or do you take it to the butcher's?" That sort of thing.
Mallo: Bethesda's *Daggerfall* had a similar kind of character-generation system. It asked you moral questions that governed your alignment.
Chris: The *Ultima* games. You were asked 12 questions in a gypsy's caravan to determine your character.
Mallo: At the end of the day I think everyone should start on a level playing field, with the same character.
Macca: Yeah, I actually agree. You should start from the same point. The development of the character should be in your hands, not the creation.
Charlie: And they have these ridiculous classes that you're forced to choose from.
Mallo: Classes aren't the ridiculous aspect of the 'beardy weirdy' RPG.
Macca: What type of class do you choose in RPGs? I bet you always choose the same sort of character every time.
Mallo: I usually go down the Fighter route.
Macca: *(Camply)* Well I like to play as a Paladin.
Everyone: *(Laughs)*
Mallo: Are you sure that's not *with* a Paladin?
Charlie: But, you know, I don't wanna have to choose my occupation before I start a game, cos then I'll just come across a locked door and think "Aw, I wish I'd have played as a locksmith…"
Mallo: Point proven. Here comes the salsa dip…

LANDS OF LORE III

Richie: I haven't played it a great deal. I spent a couple of hours with it the other day and didn't like it. I thought the graphics were pretty poor, loading times were horrendously long, disc-swapping was incredibly annoying…
Macca: How many discs is it?

Mallo: Four. There is some disc-swapping initially, but it does calm down after a little while. Anyway, *Baldur's Gate* came on five CDs and no one complained about that.
Dan: Yeah, but you only had to swap them every couple of hours, not every ten minutes like at the start of *Lands Of Lore III*.
Mallo: The interface is great – very easy to use. And the control system is spot-on.
Dan: You're missing the point – the graphics are flawed.
Mallo: Yeah, but graphics aren't everything.
Richie: But characters *are* – and those in *Lands Of Lore III* are *so* derivative. The guy with the long ears – the guy that you control – looks like a mutated German porn star. You just wish you'd got killed at the beginning.
Charlie: Mallo, you think the interface is the most interesting point about this game?
Mallo: Well, no, it's not *Lands Of Lore III*'s strongest point, but it *is*

> **"The guy with the long ears – the guy that you control – looks like a mutated German porn star"**
>
> **RICHIE ON *LANDS OF LORE III***

a strong point and I think it counts for a lot.
Macca: What is the game's strongest point?
Mallo: That it's a very easy game to play and get into. If you like fantasy games and you want something that's not overly violent, like *Fallout 2*, or not overly AD&D, like *Baldur's Gate*, or not overly action-oriented, like *Diablo*, then…
Dan: So something completely bland, then?
Everyone: *(Cheers)*
Macca: What I don't like are: trolls, pixies, golems.
Mallo: But there's one level in *Lands Of Lore III* that's set in the *C&C* universe – radiation and computers gone haywire…
Charlie: I don't care if it's set in a women's prison, for nudists.
Mallo: You have to go inside a NOD computer and deactivate it. The whole land is dying of Tiberium poisoning – there are mutants, for god's sake, not bloody orcs and goblins!
Macca: How did they fit that into the story?
Mallo: You go into the future at one point.
Charlie: The future?! What, so it gets interesting at one point?

LANDS OF LORE III

More open-ended, and with more 'proper' role-playing elements than the previous game in the series, *LOLIII* is arguably the epitome of a great RPG. Despite some dodgy voxel graphics, Westwood seem to carry it off with some style, and the resulting experience is one of fulfilment.

	PCZ #74, 90%
SCORE	
DEVELOPER	Westwood Studios
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
PRICE	£34.99

Macca: Americans have a really distorted view of history. Some of them believe there was a 'dark age' and that all the wizardry died, and that civilisation began in England where all the castles are.
Charlie: They think Merlin was real, don't they?
Mallo: It was disorienting – having this level set in *C&C* land – but it was also interesting. There was also this other level that was set in a haunted house – that too was very well done, and wasn't 'beardy weirdy'. Going back to Charlie's point about most RPGs being the same, about the mirror broken into shards, well that's basically the story to *Lands Of Lore III*.
Charlie: With huge FMV sequences of wizards and big explosions?
Macca: And Paul Presley sat in the background?
Chris: I think you're all being a bit unfair here. If you look at the environments – huge outdoor environments, you get all the dungeons, all kinds of different architecture and stuff... It's a world you can explore.
Macca: Yadda, yadda. It's got things that look good on a press

> **❝It does raise the question of what constitutes an RPG. *Half-Life* is a role-playing game to some extent❞**
>
> **MALLO ON *LANDS OF LORE III***

release, but at the end of the day is it a good game? Did it have the 'X' factor, Chris?
Macca: Westwood have painted themselves into a corner. They've got this big heritage: *Lands Of Lore* – big thing. They've got a load of spods in America queuing up, dribbling for the moment it's released, and they've made a name for themselves with anodyne, sterile, rubbishy RPGs that are unoriginal...
Mallo: That is too harsh.
Macca: Their graphics *blow,* man. Voxels – who uses voxels?
Charlie: *Kingpin* – now there's an RPG. That's a good example of something that you wouldn't even *realise* was an RPG.
Mallo: It does raise the question of what constitutes an RPG. *Half-Life* is a role-playing game to some extent.
Richie: I think *Elite* was a role-playing game.
Macca: Real life is a role-playing game.
Mallo: *Half-Life* versus real life. I've seen that somewhere before.
Charlie: I tell you what I don't like: dwarves – in AD&D games – because they remind me of those sick porn dwarf websites on the Internet.
Everyone: *(Stunned silence)* PCZ

Lands Of Lore III: ignore the graphics and you'll enjoy it.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Want a role-playing game with real depth? Something that's going to last you a couple of months? Something hugely entertaining, and fabulous to look at? Then buy our winning game, which is...

Final Fantasy VII, we have decided, is the best example of a true role-playing game available to buy for your PC at the moment. Okay, so the graphics look rough in places, and essentially it's a direct port of the PlayStation version, but the game's incredible ability to draw you into a world that has clearly been designed by madmen and sex offenders is thoroughly commendable. You only have to read Charlie's original review (*PCZ* #66, 93%) to realise this, and his comments still stand today. *FFVII* is a gaming milestone in the

truest sense of the word, and if you've yet to experience its delights you would do well to head out now and grab yourself a copy.

Unlike last issue, we are unable to give an award for the best budget buy of this Supertest, as none of the games featured here are available at those kind of knock-down prices. You may be able to get hold of *Diablo*, the oldest game on our shortlist, for around 20 quid, but our spies tell us that it will definitely be available on budget at some point during the summer.

OVERALL WINNER

Here are two good reasons to buy *Final Fantasy VII*.

Stuck on a game? Feel like there's a big party going on and you're the only person not invited? Well don't put your six-pack back in the fridge just yet, here come the *PC ZONE* revellers to whisk you into the party's VIP lounge…

YOUR HOSTS

Warren Chrismas

Keith Pullin

Adam Phillips

Phil Wand

CHEAT MASTER

Sometimes there's only one way to win, and that's to cheat. Cheating isn't fair? Hey, the *world* isn't fair

CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD
We've got over 1200 games tips and solutions squeezed on to this month's CD. Check out the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser to track them down

NEED HELP?
If your problem's game-related, get organised and…

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk
with **'Dear Keith'** or **'CheatMaster'** in the subject line.

ENEMY INFESTATION
Ripcord Games
If all that festering infestation is getting too much for you, bang in these cheats for an easier time. To activate, type them during the game and press Enter.

gsaheal	Gives all colonists full health
gsaroof	Removes roofs of all buildings so you can see inside
gsaswap	Enables you to control aliens
gsakill	Kills selected characters – best used in conjunction with previous cheat
gsastop	Stops aliens and colonists in their tracks. Type again to switch off
gsabog	Creates a BOG weapon at the cursor. Pick it up for extra defence and the ability to lock doors
gsaknife	Creates a knife weapon at the cursor. Pick it up to become invisible to aliens
gsacmdr	Creates a commander at the cursor
Gsamedi	Creates a medical officer at the cursor
Gsaboff	Creates a technician at the cursor
gsawin	Victory on that level, and skip to the next

BALDUR'S GATE
Interplay
Last month we gave you cheat codes for this smash hit RPG, and now we offer you even more. Open your baldur.ini file and type in the following lines of code to access all the movie sequences once the game has loaded.

DEATHAND=1	REST=1
BGSUNSET=1	BGENTER=1
IRONTHRN=1	PALACE=1
TAVERN=1	DUNGEON=1
BGSUNRIS=1	CAMP=1
WYVERN=1	BHAAL=1
SEWER=1	ENDMOVIE=1
ELDRCITY=1	MINEFLOD=1
ENDCRDIT=1	GNOLL=1
NASHKELL=1	BG4LOGO=1
TSRLOGO=1	BILOGO=1
INFELOGO=1	INTRO=1
FRARMINN=1	BEREGOST=1

RESIDENT EVIL 2
Capcom
We've only got a couple of cheats for Capcom's horror/adventure, but then the game is pretty easy.

If you want to play as Hunk, Chris Redfield or Ada Wong, complete the hard level using both Claire and Leon.

For unlimited ammo, go to the equip screen and press the following keys: up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, aim button.

SPELLCROSS
SCi
Type in the following cheats as many times as you need to.

On the battle screen, type 'againagain' to reset your troops' action points.

On the upgrade/research screen, type 'cashlup' to increase your money in increments of 100

SPEED BUSTERS
Ubi Soft
Try out these handy hints for the ultimate driving experience. Just type in these codes either at the start or during the actual race.

fulofit	Unlimited nitros
tagkiller	Any opponents you touch goes back to the starting line
notimelim	Deactivates checkpoints in arcade mode
choperview	Replaces the regular map display with a satellite view

REDGUARD
Virgin Interactive
Despite narrowly missing out on a Classic status two months ago, *Redguard* is still proving popular. It also seems to be rather difficult, so hit F12 to bring up the cheat console, and type 'item add,#x' where x is… Gold (2), Stoneskin potion (3), Health potion (4), Ring of Invisibility (5), Vola's Ring (6), Sabre (7), Rusty key (8), Gold key (9), Silver key (10), Amulet (11), Soul gem (12), Soul sword (13), Crowbar (14), Peg rune (15), Peg rune 2 (16), Peg rune 3 (17), Orc's blood (19), Orc's blood with… (20), Spider's milk (21), Spider's milk with… (22), Ectoplasm (23), Ectoplasm with… (24), hist sap (25), hist sap with… (26), Dwarven lore book (27), Dwarven gear (28), Glass vial (29), Glass vial filled with elixir (30), Iron weight (31), Bucket (32), Bucket full of water (33), Gauntlet rune (34), Elven artefact book (35), Redguard heroes book (37), Hammerfell book on flora (38), Map from Makio (39), Leather pouch of gold (40), Crendel's stolen map (41), Silver boat (42), Shovel (43), Aloe (44), Torch (45), Monocle eyepiece (46), Flag (47), Silver locket (48), League insignia

parchment (**49**), Joto's jail map (**50**), Flask of Lillandril (**51**), Hundings talisman (**52**), Izara's journal (**53**), Feather (**54**), Kithral's journal. The dead monk (**55**), Folks firmament book (**56**), Izara's journal locked (**57**), Star stone (**58**), Key to warehouse (**59**), Key to Izara's house (**60**), Spell (**61**), Glass bottle empty (**64**), Glass bottle with water (**65**), Glass bottle with water and aloe (**66**), Strength potion (**67**), Bandage (**68**), Bandage with blood (**69**), Sabre (**70**), Sabre (**71**), Sabre (**72**), Sabre (**73**), Bone key (**74**).

BLOOD 2: THE CHOSEN
GT Interactive

Take a look at this little lot! Press 't' during play and type in as many codes as you like.

MPGOD	God mode
MPKFA	Loads of weapons
MPAMMO	Full ammo
MPCLIP	Spectator mode (no clipping)
MPHEALTHY	Maximum health

MPWHEREAMI	Shows your co-ordinates
MPHIDEME	Hides your co-ordinates
MPBEEFCAKE	Increased power (more gore)
MPKILLEMALL	Kills all monsters on current level
MPSPEEDUP	Increases speed (can do this five times)
MPSTRONGER	Increases strength (can do this five times too!)
MPCALEB	Changes character model to Caleb
MPOPHELIA	Changes character model to Ophelia
MPISHMAEL	Changes character model to Ishmael
MPGABBY	Changes character model to Gabriella
MPSNIPERRIFLE	Gives you sniper rifle
MPHOWITZER	Gives you howitzer
MPNAPALMCANNON	
	Gives you napalm cannon

MPSINGULARITY	Gives you singularity generator
MPASSAULTRIFLE	Gives you assault rifle
MPBUGBUSTER	Gives you bug buster
MPMINIGUN	Gives you mini-gun
MPLASERRIFLE	Gives you Cobalco laser rifle
MPTESLACANNON	Gives you Tesla cannon
MPBERETTA	Places the Beretta in your right hand (type twice for one in each hand)
MPSUBMACHINEGUN	
	Places sub-machine gun in your right hand (type twice for one in each hand)
MPFLAREGUN	Places flare gun in your right hand (type twice for one in each hand)
MPSHOTGUN	Places the sawn-off shotgun in your right hand (type twice for one in each hand)

MPVOODOO	Gives you voodoo doll
MPTHEORB	Gives you the orb
MPLIFELEECH	Gives you life leech
MPGOBLE	Writes "Brian L Goble is a programming god!"
MPTOTARO	Writes "Jim Totaro is da man!"
MPGOSHOPPING	Gives all items
MPNICENURSE	Adds 25 to health
MPREALLYNICENURSE	
	Gives you 300 health
MPWARD	Gives you ward (+25 armour)
MPNEWCROWARD	
	Gives you newcroward (+100 armour)
MPCARBONFIBER	Gives you willpower power-up
MPTAKEOFFSHOES	Invisibility
MPHERKERMUR	Gives Triple Damage power-up
MPBEANSOFCOOLNESS	
	Gives a selection of weapons

DEAR KEITH

We all have a calling in life. *Keith Pullin*'s is to help *PC ZONE* readers with their gaming problems

FIGHTING A MYTH

Q I'm trying my best with *Myth 2: Soulblighter*, but can't really get the hang of it. I don't want you to spoil the game, but is there any chance you could give me some basic hints to get going? I will be forever in your debt.
Scott Field, Bolton

A I could give you some tips but it's pretty hard to know where to start, as the whole game is one of those 'practice makes perfect' kind of affairs. What I will say is know how to make the most of 'flanking' and 'splitting'; it's always more effective to split your troops and attack from different sides, as it creates multiple battles that confuse your enemy. Apart from that, never show your opponents too much respect – if you dictate the proceedings you're more likely to win.

SIX UNDERGROUND

Q I'm stuck on the boat (mission 10) in *Rainbow Six*. For some reason, every time I get to a certain area of the mission the boat blows up. I've worked out that the terrorist at the front is responsible, but I just can't get the better of him. I've tried chucking a frag grenade at him, but that doesn't work either. Please help, I'm desperate.
Jonathan Feehan

A Don't go anywhere near the terrorist at the front of the boat – he doesn't need to know you're even there. Your mission is to rescue Dr Winston, who's being held captive in the engine room. Just head straight down there as quickly

as possible and do not deviate at all, otherwise, as you've already discovered, the boat will detonate, and it's goodnight Southampton docks.

ELECTRO-BASTARD BLUES

Q I know you've printed a walkthrough, but I'm still stuck on *Carmageddon 2*, on the Group 7 mission where you have to kill the air traffic controllers. I've tried everything you say, but I seriously can't do it. Can you tell me of an alternative way to complete this mission?
Stephen Handley, Ryde

A It seems my original method is too tough for some of you. Luckily there is another way that's been brought to my attention by reader Adam Richards.

From the start, drive towards the tower and head straight past the right-hand side of it. Carry on a little further and you should see a jump. Hit this ramp, and when you land, head immediately right and follow the river down to the next jump. Line yourself up, and hit this at around 120-140mph, grabbing the electro-bastard power-up on the way. You should land on the roof of the tower, and the four controllers will be instantly zapped! I hope this helps.

STATUESQUE

Q I'm stuck on *Tomb Raider III* in the Temple of Ruins, in a room with a large pool and four lion statues on the walls. My problem is how to reach the

switch on the wall above the pool. I've tried everything I can think of. Please can you help?
Dave Maxwell

A I can just about figure out where you are from your rough description. Head to the corner of the room and go down a hole. There's another statue here, but it's alive – kill it. With that out of the way, simply climb up the wall and pull two switches. You can now escape that room.

BRAIN FALLOUT

Q I simply can't get through to the Trapper Town Garage in *Fallout 2*. I've entered the Rat Caves and keep getting lost. I know I have to reach level 2, but the trouble is there's absolutely no exit at all from level 1! How can I get there? I really hope you can help, because I've just about lost my patience.
Glynn Evans, Pontypridd

A It's always the easy ones that cause the most problems. But you're right, there is no way into level 2 from level 1. You have to go straight down to level 3, and then up into level 2 from there. When you've made it to level 2, pick up the nearby explosives and blow open the adjacent door. This leads you to the Trapper Town Garage.

HEAVY METAL BOP

Q In *SiN*, is it true you can get the robot on the firing range to dance the macarena?
Barry Simpson, Glastonbury

A Yes, it is true. Go to the sniper range where the robot is, and search around the left side of the table nearest the fridge. There's a switch there – press it and the lights go out. The lights soon come back on, but they'll be in disco mode and the robot will start dancing.

PRIVATE CHEAT

Q I bought *Privateer 2* recently. It's superb, but I can't get to grips with the combat. Could you please supply the necessary cheats so I can replace my clapped-out spacecraft and get some new weaponry to compete against these pirates?
Robert Edwards

A Tsk. Enter the Nav map and type 'NOTALENT' – this makes you invincible. You want more? Okay, try these: 'NAPLAM', 'REPMEUP', 'PETYPETY' and 'CHILLOUT'. These should give you what you need to hold your own against those skull-and-crossbones scumbags.

SNOW PROBLEM

Q *South Park* is too hard. Do you know of any way to make it easier? Please help.
Peter Moore, Finsbury Park

A Don't be such a wuss. Think of it like any other first-person shooter. In other words, run backwards while firing, and make as many confusing movements as you can. Oh, and don't bother shooting the animals, because it's a waste of precious ammo and you get no points for it. Shame though.

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

WALKTHROUGH & STRATEGY GUIDE

More Gorky Park than amusement park? *Keith 'Coaster' Pullin* **brings you the low-down on the high rollers**

⭐ **REVIEWED** *PCZ* #75 **SCORE** 89%

Completing all 21 scenarios in *Rollercoaster Tycoon* requires serious amounts of practice. This strategy guide offers tips on how to build bowel-shaking rollercoasters, as well as more general hints on the day-to-day management of your would-be Alton Towers. Finally, there's a brief walkthrough of each scenario to put you firmly on the right track. Let's roll…

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL ROLLERCOASTER

Building intense, exciting, non-nausea-inducing rollercoasters is the Holy Grail of theme park design. To achieve this golden aim you need to learn how to manage G-force.

FINDING THE G-SPOT

While standing motionless, you are experiencing 1G. That means if you weigh 12 stone, you weigh… well, 12 stone. If you add speed and resistance to the equation, such as you dropping 100 feet at 70mph and shooting straight back up into an inverted loop, you are being subjected to a force greater than gravity. In fact you're probably pulling about four vertical Gs, which means you now weigh four times your usual weight. That's some force. And, as you'd expect, it hurts.

Generally speaking, in *Rollercoaster Tycoon* it's best not to exceed 4G too often – and especially negative Gs, which occur when cars come off a straight section of track and hit a bump at high speed, or plummet down a drop with too much initial velocity, which causes weightlessness. While it's extremely exciting for a brief moment, prolonged experience simply causes your guests to spew. If one of your coasters has a high negative G rating, sort it out immediately.

G-force also works laterally (side to side). *(Are you sure about all this? – Science Ed.)* If you design a ride that hits about 5G laterally, you're basically snapping necks. Overall, you want to keep your Gs to a level that's reasonably pleasant for people to experience. By all means give the punters a bit of a shock and a thrill, but excessive exposure to high Gs is the wrong way to do it.
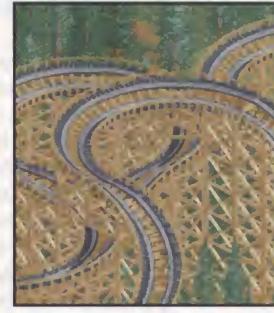
⬆ **Modify your track to include less severe bends. As long as you have the speed, your guests will be happy.**

EXCITEMENT

Exciting rides are not necessarily fast, nor do they have loads of twists, loops and turns. A high rating in the 'exciting' category usually comes from building a ride that goes over water, through tunnels, past themed scenery or close to another attraction. For example, a section that dives into a tunnel after a sharp drop, emerges into bright sunlight, performs a sharp 90-degree banked turn and darts back into the darkness rates highly on the excitement scale, but doesn't make the passengers vomit.

Also, build uphill sections of track so that cars have just enough momentum to get up and over. If passengers think they're not going to make it, and are going to plummet backwards down the track, they become even more excited. Indeed, later add-ons enable you to do just that, but to do it safely. But beware: going too fast backwards is likely to be messy.

To keep the interest factor high on slower sections of track (usually near the end), use banked helix turns. This type of curve maintains speed, and gives the rider the impression of speed.

FINDING THE G-SPOT
⬇ **Fast, sharp turns like this carry massive G-force and are not as much fun as you might initially think.**

⬆ **Always check the test results to analyse G-force ratings.**

⬆ **Add tunnels to your track to increase the excitement rating.**

⬆ Going slowly around a loop is far more exciting than hurtling through at high speed.
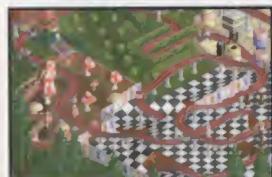
⬆ Themed areas also increase the excitement of a ride.

INTENSITY

The trick is to study the graph when you first test a ride. Look at the places with high and sudden G-forces, then smooth them out. Inserting banked corners – or, God forbid, even brakes – can usually do this. Above all, make sure the car doesn't come into the station too fast. Coming out of the last turn at 50mph and then suddenly braking to 0mph in less than a second is pretty intense; unfortunately it's also the equivalent force of a fatal car accident. Sure, the guests want some intensity in their lives, but giving it to them like that is a sure way to make them leave the park completely – possibly in a body bag.

⬆ Always check the graph when you test your ride, and iron out any points which have an excessive G-force.

⬆ If necessary, slow your cars down with brakes as they enter a station. This prevents the passengers from getting whiplash.

⬆ The launched shuttle mode: instant intensity guaranteed.

NAUSEA

Beginners usually find that most of their rollercoasters have high nausea ratings simply through a lack of understanding of roller-coaster dynamics and physics. Follow the guidelines outlined in the Excitement and Intensity sections above to reduce the nausea rating.

⬆ It's easy to tell when your ride is just a little too intense...

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Never charge more than £2 for any food or drink item, and try not to go above £1 for a map, and £3 for an umbrella. When it comes to rides, 50p for a gentle ride, £1 for a thrill ride and £2 for rollercoasters, go-carts, and water rides is about right. Try not to charge for the toilets, or transportation rides like the monorail. That's just greedy.

The admission price should start at about £10 and increase gradually from there. Let's say that each attraction (including stalls) is worth £1.50 on the entrance fee. This means that a park with ten attractions should charge £15 quid, £30 for 20 attractions, and so on. Basically you'll know if the price is right anyway, because your punters will no doubt squeal about it if they're unhappy.

Watch the animations of your guests. If they wander up to an attraction and leap backward in surprise with their eyes popping out of their head, something is wrong. Check out the price of your ride and put it right. On the other hand, if people come off a ride and jump with joy, then you know a ride's popular, so maybe jack up the price a little to maximise revenue.

⬆ Charging people to go to the loo is sure to make them mad.

⬆ Look out for guests dancing a jig as they emerge from a ride. If that happens you're doing okay.

WORKFORCE AND PATROL ZONES

Always give your workers relatively small patrol zones, otherwise the good-for-nothing slackers just wander about aimlessly, reducing park efficiency. When you employ a handyman, order him not to water the gardens or mow the grass – it's a waste of time. Instead assign him to areas near ride exits, food and drink stalls and litter bins, and get him to sweep the pavement and empty the bins.

Mechanics should be given zones that cover maybe five or six rides. Inspections of the rollercoasters should take place every 20 minutes, and everything else every 30 minutes.

Not all parks need security patrols, but if you do require their services, position them around vandalism hot-spots such as benches and litter bins.

⬆ Without patrol zones your workforce becomes a lazy, shambolic bunch of gypsies – just like that French lot at Eurodisney.

⬆ If you don't have enough security guards, guests start moaning about vandalism – and with good cause.

THE SCENIC ROUTE

Try not to destroy ready-made scenery and themes; guests are absolute suckers for something that looks pretty. Try to add fountains, statues, lamps and other gadgets, which all go towards making a more scenic environment that people are less likely to leave. Most useful of all are themed rollercoasters and other rides. Not only do they look cool, they also actually increase the excitement factor of the ride.

⬆ "Ain't that the quaintest thing y'ever did see, Darlene?"

RIGHT ON QUEUE

When you site an attraction, remember to leave enough room for a queuing area. Rollercoasters, go-carts and water-based rides tend to be among the most popular, and so need the longest queuing areas (7-10+ blocks), then it's thrill rides (4-6 blocks), and finally the gentle rides (2-3 blocks).

Even though it's fairly common practice at most real-life theme parks, in *Rollercoaster Tycoon* you don't actually need to queue at any of the refreshment stalls, so don't bother building queuing areas by them.

Another thing: if a ride takes about two minutes, people are going to be queuing for longer than a ride that takes only ten seconds. Think about this and plan appropriately.

Occasionally guests complain about long queues. If this happens you can do one of two things: either extend the station platform (rollercoasters etc), or raise the price of the ride to scare a few people away. On the flip side, if a ride has no queues at all, reduce the price to attract people to it. It's usually the gentler rides that guests start to lose interest in, and if this happens just swallow your pride and keep reducing the price. Don't worry about making a loss, there are ➡

bound to be other rides making money. The most important thing is to keep your guests happy.

⊕ Give ample room for your adrenalin-seeking punters to queue, and put interesting things nearby to quell the tedium of waiting for a ride.

⊕ Some thrill rides are more popular than others. The swinging ship seems to be a favourite – as long as the price is right.

⊕ If a ride lasts a while, make sure you increase the size of the queuing area.

THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Pathways obviously enable guests to get from one part of the park to another, but they also serve as viewing platforms. Position your paths so that they meander tantalisingly near rollercoasters and other interesting-looking rides. Put a few benches down as well so that people can gaze at the ride while they eat their pizza or whatever. Dig some tunnels. Do anything humanly possible to make the pathway an attraction in itself.

⊕ Use pathways to give guests a good view of the attractions.

MARKETING TALK

If all else fails you can always spend a bit of extra cash on marketing campaigns, although generally speaking they are most effective at the start and end of a scenario. One cunning tactic you

can use if you're short of guests with about six weeks to go is to have a massive blanket advertising campaign and entice revellers that way.
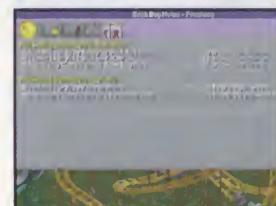
⊕ If your park is a bit on the crap side, encourage visitors by blatantly lying on television about how good it is.

SCENARIOS IN BRIEF

Because the tactics for the completion of each scenario are essentially the same, here's a quick walkthrough outlining the main points.

Forest Frontiers

⊕ Use pre-made rollercoasters to begin with.

Set the park entrance fee at around £15. Go for the 'woodchip' rollercoaster and spread a selection of gentle and thrill rides around it. Employ a mechanic and two handymen to keep things ticking over. Only research ride improvements.

Dynamite Dunes

Increase entrance fee to £20. Build a selection of rides around the initial rollercoaster. Employ four handymen and two mechanics to keep the park in shape. Finally, reduce the ride prices towards the end of the second year, and start some marketing campaigns to attract punters.

Leafy Lake

⊕ The perfect setting for some gentle water exploits.

Build a pre-made rollercoaster near the entrance, and another on the other side of the lake. Pad out the rest of the park with a varied selection of gentle and thrill rides. Security is needed, as well as some handymen and mechanics.

Diamond Heights

⊕ Your first real taste of vandalism. Hire security to keep things under control.

Hire three mechanics, two security guards and about five handymen. Build an information kiosk, food and drink stalls and

some toilets near the entrance. Introduce some gentler rides and a few thrill ones. Start a marketing campaign for the new attractions, then sit back.

Evergreen Gardens

⊕ The existing scenery adds to the excitement, so don't destroy it.

Research stalls early so you can get the information kiosk, otherwise your guests will become lost. There's loads of room available, so spread your rides around the park; position them between scenic areas so guests have exciting walks. Build a steam train or monorail to help guests get around the park.

KATIE'S DREAMLAND

Underground rides are an efficient way of saving space.

Bumbly Beach

⊕ The big dipper will always be the number one attraction at the beach.

Add various attractions to the existing path, with a handyman and a mechanic patrolling each side. Extend another patrolled and ride-laden path straight down the middle of the park. Place a gathering of refreshments stalls near the entrance, and don't forget the toilets.

Trinity Islands

⊕ You need to flatten a lot of land to succeed here.

Flatten the land, and add minor rides along the existing pathways. When you can, build a wooden rollercoaster somewhere in the middle of the islands. Advertise it and the punters should start flooding in. Raise the admission fee to £20. Create more land. Add new rides.

Katie's Dreamland

Set the admission price at £20 for some quick cash. Get your guests eating food, and hire more mechanics. Raise the price of Runaway Plumber to £3. Research thrill rides and place them in the area just outside the rollercoaster.

DYNAMITE DUNES

£8,552.20
744 Guests
March, Year 4
12°C

Build around major attractions to keep all the rides exciting.

Pokey Park

⊕ **Replace all the old rides with newer, more exciting experiences.**

Demolish the Twister in the corner and replace it with a wooden rollercoaster. Raise the admission price £10. Gradually replace all the rides with more exciting ones, and aim for another rollercoaster to finish off.

White Water Park

⊕ **Water isn't everyone's cup of tea, so throw in a few thrill rides.**

Research nothing but thrill rides, and add them to the vast array of water-based outings. There's loads of room for expansion, so try to get in a coaster or two. Add two clusters of refreshment stalls – one near the entrance and one near the log flumes.

Millennium Mines

⊕ **Lots of scenery makes this a naturally exciting place.**

At first the only thing in this massive mine area is the train. Add another station towards the

far side of the mines, then start adding a selection of rides around the two stations. Aim for about 30 attractions, and make use of the underground.

Karts & Coasters

⊕ **A lumberjack's paradise. Get rid of the trees and get building.**

One mechanic in this place? That's a joke. Hire another one, and assign them to two rides each for now. Clear away some trees and add some thrill rides – keep this park for the hard-core adrenalin addicts only.

Mel's World

⊕ **Go for a wide variety of rides to cater for as many tastes as possible.**

There's nothing really too abnormal about this scenario apart from the vast number of people you have to entice in. Basically, work faster than usual and add a few gentler rides to appeal to families.

Mystic Mountain
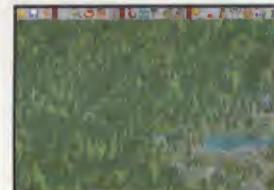
⊕ **Expand your park up the mountain by buying more land.**

Ultimately you want to set up a meaty mine car rollercoaster around the original scenery on the mountain. There's loads of room for park expansion, and this should enable you to create some hugely enjoyable rides.

Pacific Pyramids
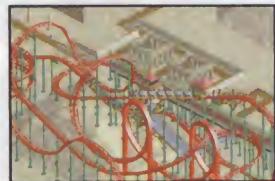
⊕ **Make use of the open space by filling it with rides like this.**

Another one to build from scratch, but yet again there's acres of room for expansion. Wrap some tracks around the sphinx for added effect, and also expand upon the existing underground tunnel system.

Crumbly Woods

⊕ **This place is falling to pieces. Replace the lot.**

Not long after you begin, Double Trouble crashes, and soon other

rides meet the same fate. Hire an army of mechanics to keep the old attractions going while you build new ones. Add themes wherever possible to attract the 1200 visitors you need.

Paradise Pier

⊕ **Give your rollercoasters water splashes to maximise the effect of the water.**

Don't worry about the lack of land, you can build wherever you want. There's loads of space for everything, so go for some huge rollercoasters. Be careful with your money though – building on water is more expensive than building on land.

Lightning Peaks

There's scope for some giant drops and intense underground rides here. Concentrate your attractions around the top of the three peaks and include refreshment stalls and other vital amenities. The main problem here is rain, so build plenty of information kiosks where your visitors can buy umbrellas.

Build around the peaks for the most exciting rides.

Ivory Towers

⊕ **Hire a massive workforce to clean up Ivory Towers' many anti-social problems.**

Clean the park – there's vomit due to two nauseating rides. Next add security guards. Build a few gentle rides to calm things down, and add some toilets and food and drink stalls. Increase your workforce, and work fast.

Rainbow Valley

⊕ **Why buy land if you're not allowed to change the landscape?**

The local authorities won't allow you to demolish trees or change the landscape, so tread carefully. Go underground or high above ground. Alternatively, build in the water – there's enough of it.

Thunder Rock

⊕ **You need to have mastered underground construction.**

A great place for a mixture of open-air and underground rides. Stick all the thrill and gentle rides around the base and on top of the rock. Build the rollercoasters inside, and clinging to the outside walls. PCZ

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

PLAYERS' GUIDE

Our own *Keith Pullin* and Sports Interactive's *Marc Vaughan* let rip with their half-time team talk

⊙ REVIEWED *PCZ* #73 **SCORE** 93%

Poor David James, an object of ridicule when it comes to ability and hairstyle.

TEAM TACTICS

A 0-0 draw at Old Trafford managing Spurs was the happiest day of Kevin's life.

"You think *CM3* ruined your social life? You didn't work on it for two years."

KEVIN TURNER
programmer, CM3

"With Tottenham I use a 4-1-2-1-2 formation which doesn't concede many goals – 0-0 against Man Utd at Old Trafford, for example. On the other hand, when I use this formation with Falkirk, I lose most games and have to fall back on a 4-4-2 which seems to be a lot more suited to the Falkirk players."

MARC VAUGHAN
lead programmer, CM3

"I tend to play using the default 4-4-2 tactic, but with the two wingers stretched wide and the two front men pushed forward slightly more. This tactic works, but only if you have forwards with good positional sense (the tactic often causes the strikers to move offside), and fast wingers who have good dribbling skills."

The following hints and tips are intended to help ease the migration from *CM97/98* to *CM3* and guide you towards the all-important silver cup. Because *CM3* has been completely rewritten, the match engine is now much more flexible, making it harder to define a 'killer' tactic. Ultimately this means you have to adapt your style for virtually each game, so make sure you concentrate at all times and don't fall into the trap of becoming complacent.

TALKING A GOOD GAME

The commentary in *CM3* has been enhanced to enable you to easily ascertain the reasons behind your team's success or failure. As well as the various statistics available to you as manager (tackling, passing, shooting and so on), the following key commentary messages should be taken into consideration.

Goalkeepers

Messages about dropped balls etc highlight your keeper's poor handling ability. This is a huge weakness in the Premiership, as anybody managing Liverpool already knows.

Defenders

Messages about successful tackles (or players beating them) give an indication of your defender's skill in comparison to the opposition player involved. Bear in mind that there may be a key player on the opposing side

who cannot be handled by a single defender (Alan Shearer, for example). In this case it may make sense to have two players man-marking him – one defender and one midfielder work best.

If opposition players are getting shots in but the commentary suggests that they had very little space to do so, this indicates that your current tactic is closing them down successfully, if not actually retrieving the ball. If you'd rather get the ball, try pressing a little bit harder or, alternatively, ask your team to tackle harder, although this increases the risk of fouling and giving away penalties – not to mention yellow and red cards.
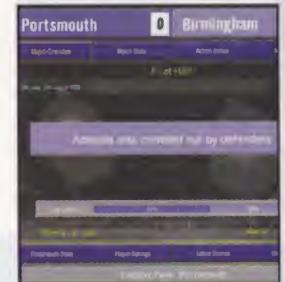
⊙ Keep pressing and get those tackles in for a true Wimbledon sense of occasion.

Midfielders

You get messages about passes leading to shots (especially where the commentary mentions easy chances or tap-ins), or about lots of passes going astray. If your forwards are getting marked out of a game, get your midfielders to make runs into the box in classic Paul Scholes/Bryan Robson fashion.

① Use the tactics editor to get your midfielders moving into useful positions.

Attackers

Messages about shots where a goalkeeper was off his line tend to indicate a player with good anticipation and vision. If the commentary indicates that strikers have little space in which to work, the defence is closing them down successfully. If this happens, find players with better off-the-ball movement, or edit the players' runs to try and shake off their markers.

① Some players have better vision than others. Steve Claridge of Portsmouth is not necessarily one of the more gifted.

SHINY HAPPY PLAYERS

In a similar manner to CM97/98, happy players perform slightly better than unhappy ones. The following factors can affect a player's mood.

Contract How happy the player is with his current contract.

Squad Status How he is perceived within the club. Bear in mind that if you give a player a false squad status (ie tell him he's an important first-team player and then leave him in the reserves) he's quite likely to kick up a stink.

Appearances How regularly he plays for the team.

Country How happy he is living in his current location (city, country).

Languages Whether he can communicate with his manager and the rest of the team.

Time at club Whether he feels he's achieved all he can at his current club.

Favourite staff Whether he likes any of his team-mates.

Disliked staff Whether he dislikes any of his team-mates.
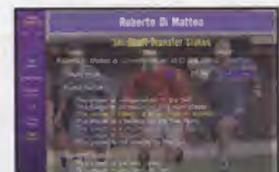
① There are many things you can tell a player in order to keep him happy. The famous 'squad rotation' excuse favoured by Senor Vialli can keep even world class players quiet.

SEARCHING FOR PLAYERS

As in previous versions of *Championship Manager*, finding decent players for your team is of the utmost importance. The search filters should be on the following settings when looking for your perfect player. In general, if most of your requirements match up, consider purchasing the player for your club.

Goalkeeper

Balance	Good
Bravery	Good
Handling	Excellent
Positioning	Excellent

Tip: According to George Graham, you get the defence right and go on from there.

Defender

Anticipation	Very Good
Bravery	Good
Heading	Excellent (central defenders only)
Tackling	Excellent
Teamwork	Good
Strength	Good
Positioning	Very Good

Player & Staff Search

Funds - £5M

Filters for Player Search

General		Miniclass				Give
Acceleration	-	+		Adaptability	-	+
Aggression	-	+		Agility	-	+
Anticipation	16	+		Balance	-	+
Bravery	14	+		Creativity	-	+
Crossing	-	+		Determination	-	+
Dribbling	-	+		Flair	-	+
Handling	-	+		Heading	17	+
Influence	-	+		Jumping	-	+
Marking	-	+		Off The Ball	-	+
Pace	-	+		Passing	-	+
Positioning	16	+		Reflexes	-	+
Set Pieces	-	+		Shooting	-	+
Stamina	-	+		Strength	14	+
Tackling	17	+		Teamwork	14	+
Technique	-	+		Versatility	-	+
Work Rate	-	+		Match	70	

Cancel	Ok
Cancel	Ok

① It takes defenders a while to learn the game, so the better ones tend to be a bit older.

Midfielder (defensive)

Bravery	Good
Heading	Good (central midfielders only)
Teamwork	Good
Stamina	Good
Strength	Good
Tackling	Very Good
Positioning	Very Good

Tip: Get yourself a nice solid 'Batty'-type player who can sit in front of the defence and ruin the game for everyone else.

Midfielder (attacking)

Acceleration	Good
Anticipation	Good
Creativity	Good
Off the Ball	Very Good
Pace	Good
Passing	Excellent
Teamwork	Good

Tip: Attacking midfielders are an important part of the team, especially for free-flowing football tacticians.

Striker

Acceleration	Good

Anticipation	Very Good
Heading	Good
Off the Ball	Good
Pace	Good
Shooting	Excellent

Tip: These are the stats you must concentrate on if you're looking for 25-plus goals per season from your front man.

Captain

Age 24+

Influence	Very Good
Teamwork	Good

Tip: Captains can have a huge effect on a match, so choose wisely.

Actual values for the abilities listed above have not been included, as they change depending on the team you are managing. For example, a defender at Brighton with a tackling rating of nine would be fairly good, but put the same defender in Arsenal's back four and he's likely to be a bit out of his depth.

Here's a rough table, using values for three different clubs, to show you what we mean.

Comment	Brighton	Norwich	Arsenal
Good	6+	8+	10+
Very Good	10+	12+	14+
Excellent	12+	14+	16+

RESERVE TEAMS

For the first time ever, reserve teams have been implemented which enable you to test out new purchases and young players in unimportant games. Reserve-team games mirror your first-team league games and are played on the day before the first-team match. The results of reserve matches have no real bearing on the game, and don't affect the board's opinion of you. However, remember that they do have a very real effect on the development and mind-set of the players involved in the matches.

Use your reserve team for players recovering from injury ➜

PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS

Here's a description of the various visible player characteristics in the game

Characteristic	Description
Acceleration	How quickly he can reach full speed from a standing start
Adaptability	How well he adapts to living in a foreign country
Aggression	Overall aggressiveness in attack or defence
Agility (GK)	A keeper's mobility and ability to dive for the ball
Anticipation	Ability to anticipate where the ball is going next
Balance	Ability to keep his balance when challenged
Bravery	How likely he is to go in where it hurts. Good for strikers
Creativity	The ability to see and execute key passes
Crossing	Knocking in successful crosses from dangerous areas
Determination	His desire to win the match. Should be high for captains
Dribbling	How well he controls the ball and goes around players
Flair	How likely he is to do the unexpected
Handling (GK)	How often he holds on to shots and crosses
Heading	Obvious. Make sure your defenders have a high rating here
Influence	Ability to lead and inspire his team. Important for captains
Jumping	How well he can outjump opponents to the ball
Marking	The higher the rating, the more he'll stick to his target man
Off the Ball	His ability to make space for himself and others
Pace	How fast he can run when at top speed
Passing	How accurately he can pass the ball to the intended target
Positioning	Defender's ability to hold a good defensive position
Reflexes (GK)	A keeper's ability to make reflex saves of point-blank shots
Set Pieces	How accurately he can shoot or pass from a free kick
Shooting	Accuracy when it comes to long shots and general finishing
Stamina	How long he's able to play before tiring
Strength	Physical strength and presence on the pitch
Tackling	His ability to make strong, fair and well-timed tackles
Teamwork	How well he plays as part of an overall team strategy
Technique	How relaxed and comfortable he is on the ball

Versatility	Ability to adapt to playing in unfamiliar positions
Work Rate	How hard he works in a match

The following hidden statistics also exist:

Pressure	Ability to perform under threat of relegation, or the pressure of a promotion challenge
Professionalism	Ability to conduct himself on and off the pitch
Loyalty	Likelihood of him wanting to stay at your club through the bad times
Sportsmanship	Whether or not he's the kind of player who'll kick the ball out of play when an opposing player is injured, for example
Temperament	How likely he is to flare up and punch/kick/shout/push etc
Consistency	Wingers tend to have lower ratings, whereas defenders are fairly solid
Corners	Whether or not he can swing a decent corner in
Decisions	Ability to make split-second decisions to benefit the team
Dirtiness	How much of a hacker he is
Finishing	Coolness in front of goal
Free Kicks	Whether he can bend one into the top corner or float a pinpoint ball into the box
Long Shots	How likely he is to score from outside the box
Important Matches	Even the best players can crack when it comes to the World Cup Final
Injury Proneness	Darren Anderton and Jamie Redknapp might have high ratings in this category
One-on-Ones	Ability to take on and go round another player
Penalties	Skill in putting the ball away from the spot
Throw Ins	Ability to perform long throw-ins
Vision	How good he is at seeing other players in space, or a goalkeeper off his line

Study players' profiles to learn their strengths and weaknesses – it's worth it.

Hey, nobody's perfect.

(those with an orange 'Inj' sign), or young players who aren't yet ripe for the first team. Be careful though – players over 24 years of age may get annoyed if left in the reserves for a prolonged period of time, although the old squad rotation system excuse might fool them for a while.

⬆ Use the reserve team to test out new signings, young players, or players recovering from injury.

Leave the training to the backroom staff – you've got enough to think about already.

ON THE TRAINING GROUND

Another first in *CM3* is training. This has been implemented in such a way that you can either ignore it, in which case your assistant manager or head coach (depending on who is available) keeps your players training sensibly, or you can decide to take control of training yourself and subtly influence the way in which your team develops.

STYLE CHALLENGE

As in real life, the tactics you use should be determined by the players available, and not the

other way around. There's probably a certain way you want to play, but ultimately the best way to do this is to slowly change the players in your team to reflect your own personal style. At least now you can appreciate what it's like to be a new manager coming into a club, with a bunch of no-hopers he doesn't really want.

PICTURE PERFECT

You can use any BMP as the background in *CM3*. Here's how...
1 Take your picture and turn it into BMP format using a paint package of your choice (the picture must be 800x600 in size, and 16 million colours).

RECOMMENDED PLAYERS

The following players are recommended if you're managing teams in the English lower divisions (ie Second, Third or Conference)

Trevor Benjamin	FLC	Cambridge
Tonton Mokouko	AM/FC	Djurgarden
Kevin Sandwith	DL	Barrow
Michael Barron	DC	Free transfer
Kevin James	DC	Falkirk
Jeffrey Minton	MC	Brighton
Dmitri Gunko	DL	Spartak Moscow
Stuart Evans	DC	Hereford
Robert Douglas	GK	Dundee
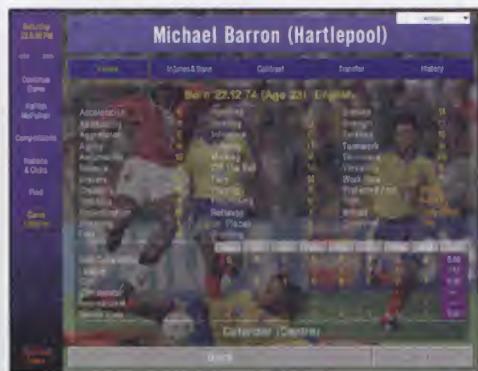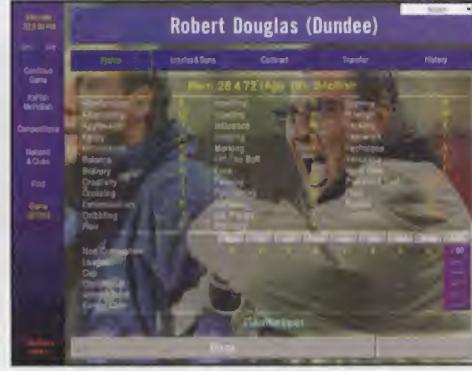
PICTURE PERFECT

Championship Manager 3

Picture Editor

> You can change the background to whatever you want.

Use the menubar to load bitmap image files for the menubar background, main screen background or history dialog.

Then save the image to disk in Championship Manager 3 format.

Menubar image: 90x600 16Million (24Bit) colours, Windows RGB Encoded BMP file

Background image: 800x600 16Million (24Bit) colours, Windows RGB Encoded BMP file

History image: 257X335 16Million (24Bit) colours, Windows RGB Encoded BMP file

Help image: 400X300 16Million (24Bit) colours, Windows RGB

2 Place the file in a safe directory (eg C:\temp). Try to put all your BMP files in the same location.
3 Click on Load, then Background Bitmap.
4 Select the BMP you wish to convert from the directory you specified, and it appears instantly on the main screen. If the picture looks wrong or is corrupted in some way, check your BMP file.
5 To save this picture into *CM3* RGN format, click on Save, then Background Bitmap. Name the file then hit OK.

PLAY IT DOWN THE LINE

Tactics come in all shapes and sizes, so if you're still seeking that winning combination visit **www.cm3.com** to download some more. While you're at it check out the recommended players list – it makes the transfer market a whole lot easier. On top of all this, you can find alternative strategies there too. PCZ

❶ There's a whole host of *CM3* **goodies available online.**

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

OVER £50,000 WORTH OF PRIZES UP FOR GRABS IN TOTAL!

DO YOU RECKON YOU AND YOUR MATES HAVE WHAT IT TAKES to put together a team that can beat all-comers to become the UK PC Games Champions 1999? Dennis Publishing and The Playing Fields have joined forces with AMD and Microsoft to launch the search for the cream of computer games players – and it could be your team that carries off the £10,000 cash prize, not to mention a top-flight gaming PC each... See opposite for the full low-down on the prizes on offer, or visit the Official UK Games Championships website at www.ukpcgc.com.

The event is designed to test the PC game-playing skills of teams of between two and four players who will compete using the latest PC technology, powered by AMD's K6®-III Processors with 3DNow!(™) Technology and Microsoft's award-winning gaming hardware.

Teams will also be able to make use of Microsoft's MSN Gaming Zone UK to practice their skills online, find team partners and follow the event itself. Visit AMD at www.3dnow.de/gaming_uk2/ and MSN at zone.msn.co.uk/competition for further details.

Five Regional Qualifiers (London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff and Manchester) will be held between June and August 1999 (run by The Playing Fields), each of which will each see 36 teams compete for the right to progress to the Grand Final in London on September 18. The Grand Final will be held at The Playing Fields in London's West End, where there will also be an all-comers Drop-in qualifier during July and August. See opposite for details on the Regional and Drop-in Qualifiers, or visit the official website at www.ukpcgc.com.

THE GAMES

Teams will have to compete in four different gaming genres, playing eight games in all – two from each genre. The teams will designate players to play each of the eight games as they choose.

The Gaming Categories

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS
Unreal, Quake II

REAL-TIME STRATEGY
Age Of Empires, Total Annihilation

DRIVING GAMES
Motocross Madness, Need For Speed III

SPORTS GAMES
Actua Soccer 3, Jimmy White's 2: Cueball

WIN £10,000 CASH

THE QUALIFIERS

Check the list below to find the Regional Qualifier closest to your location.

WHAT IS THE DROP-IN QUALIFIER?

The Drop-in qualifier is intended to allow teams who are unable to enter a Regional Qualifier the opportunity to participate in the Championships. Teams can turn up at The Playing Fields to compete on the same basis as the other Qualifiers. The Drop-in qualifier runs from 5th July to 29th August and is available during The Playing Fields, opening hours (Monday to Saturday, 12 noon to 11pm). Teams wishing to compete must arrive before 6.30pm to allow enough time. The Drop-In costs £20 to enter, and unlike the other Qualifiers, we are unable to refund this entry fee.

HOW TO ENTER

Send the coupon (or a photocopy) with a cheque for £20 (refunded on arrival at your Qualifier, except the Drop-in Qualifier, for which no refunds will be given) and you're in the running – on a first come, first served basis, with preference given to teams of four as entries are limited. Your cheque will not be cashed until your entry is accepted and a rule pack sent to you. All team members must be UK residents aged 15 or above. Employees of, or freelancers associated with, Dennis Publishing, The Playing Fields, Microsoft or AMD are ineligible for entry. Entrants accepted will be sent a full rule pack. If you wish to read these before entering, send an SAE to The Playing Fields (address below) or log on to the website (www.ukpcgc.com).

THE PRIZES

£1500 cash prize to each of the six winning Qualifier teams. Plus, the highest scorers in each of the eight individual games at each of the Qualifiers around the country will win a prize from the game's publisher worth at least £100. The highest scorers from the entire Championships in each of the eight games will each be presented with a prize from the game's publisher worth at least £2500! Third place in the final: a top-of-the-range 2D/3D graphics card. Second place: £1000 cash for the team and a top-quality monitor for each team member. The winners will walk away with the £10,000 cash prize and a top-flight PC for each member (worth around £2000 at current prices).

The Regional Qualifiers

DATE OF QUALIFIER	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE
5 – 6 Jun 1999	London, at The Playing Fields	28 May 1999
12 – 13 Jun 1999	Birmingham, venue tba	4 June 1999
3 – 4 Jul 1999	Cardiff, venue tba	25 June 1999
10 – 11 Jul 1999	Glasgow, venue tba	2 July 1999
7 – 8 Aug 1999	Manchester, venue tba	30 July 1999
5 Jul – 29 Aug 1999	Drop-In Qualifier at The Playing Fields	N/A

● Teams unable to attend any other Regional Qualifier can 'drop-in' to The Playing Fields in London between the indicated dates and compete on the spot. No refunds of the £20 entry fee are applicable in this case.

● All Teams entering must be able to provide at least two of its members to attend the Grand Final, which will take place at The Playing Fields in London on 18th September 1999.

UKPCGAMESCHAMPIONSHIPS1999

Team name	Team Captain's name and age

Other team members' names and ages

Captain's address	Postcode

Captain's daytime phone	Captain's email address

The Regional Qualifier we will like to attend is

☐ **At least two team members would be able to attend the Grand Final in London on 18th September 1999.** If any team members are 15, permission is required from parent/guardian. Please enclose a letter from each parent/guardian indicating permission to enter has been granted.

☐ **I enclose a cheque/PO for £20 payable to The Playing Fields.** Your cheque will not be cashed until your entry is accepted and your rule pack sent to you.

UKPCGC is a joint project between The Playing Fields Limited (Reg No. 3343837) and Dennis Publishing Limited (Reg No. 1138891) Registered office: 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Tel: 0171 631 1433; Fax: 0171 636 5668. UKPCGC reserves the right to change the rules, prize structure and/or format of the Championships as circumstances dictate without prior notice.

UKPCGC
The Playing Fields
139 – 143 Whitfield Street,
London W1P 5RY

PCZ 01

HOW TO...
PLAY GAMES ONLINE

Everyone's getting connected. Everyone's playing games online. You should too, or people will point and laugh

⭐ **EXPERT ONLINE** Phil Wand

As you read this, countless gamers are hooked up and playing online. There are well over 300 different *Half-Life* servers to choose from, 400 *Starsiege: Tribes* servers, and 100s more for *Quake* and *Quake II* to take stock of the *Quake* community. Just consider the number of people with access to the Internet – eight million of the buggers in this country alone – together with the massive number of Internet-ready games, and you realise that it's no longer a back-room fun-fest requiring inside knowledge, whispered codes and arcane software, it's a major gaming revolution.

Before you are frightened off, bear in mind that the Internet is nothing more than a jumbo-size network of computers. In other words, it's a concept that any modern PC is perfectly at home with. As long as you're running either Windows 95, Windows 98 or Windows NT, the only thing you have to do after choosing a modem (easy) and an Internet Service Provider (a doddle) is to brace yourself for the phone bill.

So, where do you start to join in the fun? Right here…

1. THE HARDWARE

Right now, the only thing you need to get going on and up that Internet ramp is a modem. This unassuming little gadget turns digital information into honks and squeaks that are sent down your phone line to your ISP (see right).

What we've done here is narrow your choice down to three of the top-selling internal products. You could opt for external versions – in simpler terms, the same electronics in a separate box – but the prices are around £10 higher, and we reckon it's just needless clutter for your desktop.

If you decide to do your own thing and visit a local computer supplier, our only advice is to check that your new bit of kit conforms to the ITU V.90 standard (see our Glossary of Terms on page 135 for more details).

Don't be too worried about getting it plugged into your PC, as comprehensive instructions are supplied with each product. If you can screw in a light bulb without setting yourself on fire and wrecking the local sub-station, you can push a modem into place.

PCZONE CHOICE

HAYES ACCURA 56K V.90 SPEAKERPHONE INTERNAL
£80

⊕ Solid, reliable modems with voicemail, caller ID, fax support and both speaker phones and microphones for hands-free conversations.

PACE 56 VOICE INTERNAL V.90
£85

⊕ The Pace 56 Voice Internal is beautifully made, British, and supports fax send and receive as well as full voice messaging.

3COM SPORTSTER 56K WINMODEM V.90
£75

⊕ 3Com are the world's biggest suppliers of modems, and the Winmodem is well-supported and priced to sell. It includes fax capability.

2. CHOOSE YOUR ISP

Okay, by now you should be tooled up with a modem. If you had an AOL or CompuServe CD fall into your lap when you opened up the manual, make yourself a decent cup of coffee and use it as a drinks mat. These 'added value' online services are far too costly and not what you want. They also failed our ISP test several issues back by not answering their email.

Remember that you can now get connected almost anywhere – even *The Sun* newspaper, Tesco and Arsenal FC are offering free access. While our little round-up is by no means a definitive list, it does give a good idea of what to look for and what to avoid.

BT ClickFree

BT CLICKFREE
www.btclickfree.excite.co.uk

MORE INFORMATION Not listed

TECH SUPPORT 0906 3020240 (50p/min)

TIMES AVAILABLE 8am to 12midnight, 7 days a week

PRICING Free

WEB SPACE None

OVERVIEW Lousy website, costly tech support, no phone number for inquiries, email is provided by a separate BT division, which doesn't support V.90. You even have to have Calling Line Identification (CLI) on your phone so they can 'authorise' your calls. Forget it.

⊕ **UPPERS** Speed

⊙ **DOWNERS** Everything else

PCZVERDICT 50%

CIX

CIX INTERNET
www.cix.co.uk

MORE INFORMATION 0181 255 5000

TECH SUPPORT 0181 255 5151

TIMES AVAILABLE 8am to 10pm Mon to Fri, 12pm to 6pm Sat and Sun

PRICING £17.61 monthly

WEB SPACE 5Mb

OVERVIEW Nothing beats the community spirit on CIX. The games server runs top titles, and the connection speed is blistering. Tech support responded to our email within three minutes. Recently voted No.1 by *Internet Magazine*.

⬆ **UPPERS** Community • Speed • Reliability • Conferencing • Games server

⬇ **DOWNERS** Pricing • Miserly Web space

PCZVERDICT 81%

DEMON INTERNET
www.demon.net

MORE INFORMATION 0845 272 2666

TECH SUPPORT 0845 272 2444

TIMES AVAILABLE 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

PRICING £11.75 monthly

WEB SPACE 20Mb

OVERVIEW ISP stalwart with good service, glossy magazine and 30-day free trial. Only downside is the £120 annual cost.

⬆ **UPPERS** Unrivalled service and support

⬇ **DOWNERS** Cost

PCZVERDICT 80%

DIRECT CONNECTION
www.dircon.net

MORE INFORMATION 0845 111 8822

TECH SUPPORT 0845 111 8811

TIMES AVAILABLE 9am to 9pm, 7 days a week

PRICING £13.50 monthly

WEB SPACE 20Mb

OVERVIEW Although you get great service and connectivity provided by one of the old boys, it doesn't disguise the price tag. £13.50 a month is £13.50 more than you need to spend.

⬆ **UPPERS** Nice, friendly feel

⬇ **DOWNERS** £162 a year is just too much to pay these days.

PCZVERDICT 77%

DIXONS FREESERVE
www.freeserve.net

MORE INFORMATION 0990 500049

TECH SUPPORT 0839 517517 (50p/min, average call costs £2.50)

TIMES AVAILABLE 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

PRICING Free

WEB SPACE 15Mb

OVERVIEW We've heard of people complaining about the FreeServe service, only to go back and sign up again. It's free – if you don't like it, you can always take your custom elsewhere.

⬆ **UPPERS** Free • Easy sign up • Works for us

⬇ **DOWNERS** Tech support cost • Reports of engaged lines

PCZVERDICT 84%

VIRGIN
www.virgin.net

MORE INFORMATION Not listed

TECH SUPPORT Not listed

TIMES AVAILABLE 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

PRICING Free

WEB SPACE 10Mb

OVERVIEW Hmm... Virgin was always a decent ISP, but with no monthly subscription fee, it's gone a bit potty. It has £1/min support cost (twice that of the widely lamented FreeServe charge), no customer service numbers, and gave no response to our mail.

⬆ **UPPERS** Five mailboxes • Good connectivity

⬇ **DOWNERS** Measly Web space • Cost of support • What support? • Pants website

PCZVERDICT 60%

So, what should you do now? Easy. Contact one or more of these fine organisations (or visit your local Web café to fill out your details online – most ISPs support this way of signing up). You soon get a pack in the post, with new software and a unique user name and password. You're almost there.

3. YOUR SYSTEM

Once you have received your introductory pack from your choice of ISP, simply run the set-up program as you would if you were installing a game. Long gone are manual tweaks and fiddling about, as nearly all connection wizards do the entire job for you, from installing the relevant software (for instance, *Internet Explorer* or *Netscape Communicator*) to dialling on for the first time.

In case you need to create your own dial-up connection, open up your Dial-Up Networking folder (double-click on your My Computer icon and you'll find it in there) and follow the instructions set out right and over the page.

---
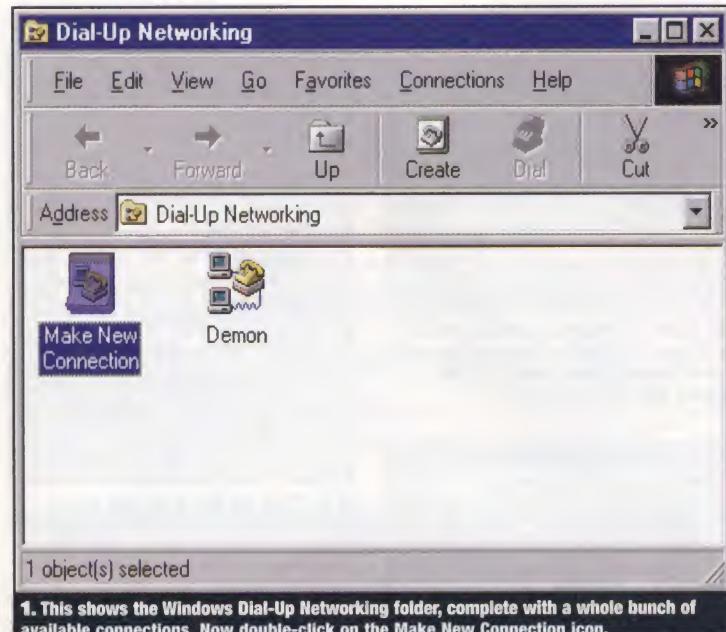
1. This shows the Windows Dial-Up Networking folder, complete with a whole bunch of available connections. Now double-click on the Make New Connection icon.

2. Type a name to describe your new connection. This is just a reminder, so you can type what you want. Make sure the device listed is your primary modem. Press Next.
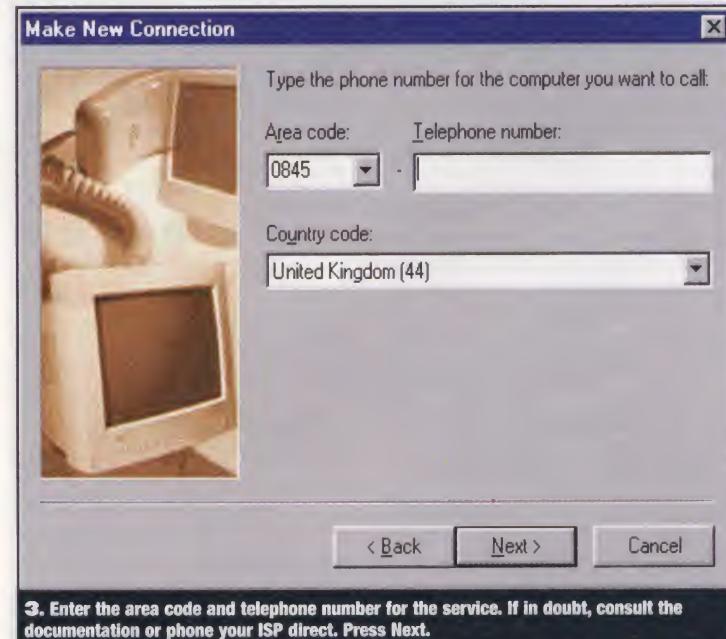
3. Enter the area code and telephone number for the service. If in doubt, consult the documentation or phone your ISP direct. Press Next.

4. This is just a confirmation screen. If you want to go back and change the details, press Back (or press Cancel and start again). Otherwise press Finish.

5. With your Dial-Up Networking folder still open, right-click on the connection you just created, and select Properties from the pop-up menu. This screen appears.
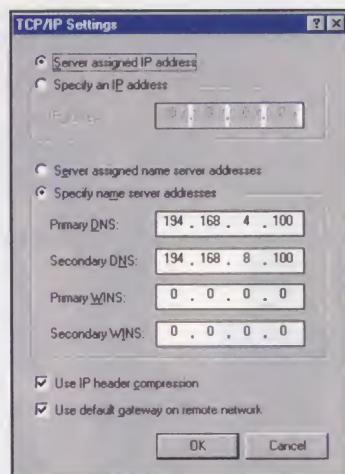
7. These are vital to the way your connection works. If the wrong numbers are in here, you won't be going anywhere. Check with your ISP to make sure everything's okay.

4. ONLINE ORGY

With your new connection up and running, you're now free to browse the world's largest software repository – the Web. Crack open your browser and start somewhere like www.yahoo.com, www.netscape.com or www.excite.co.uk – just type it into the Address bar and press Enter on your keyboard.

Your ISP's home page is often as good a
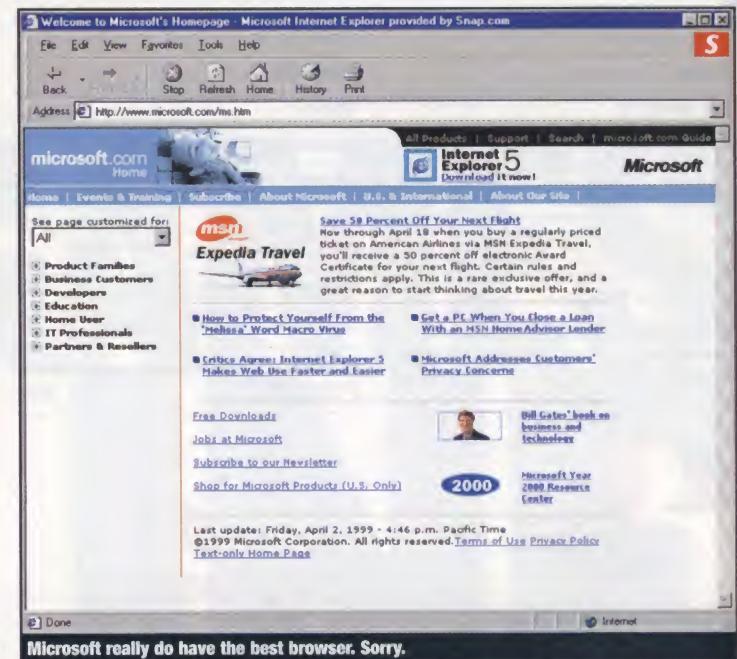
Microsoft really do have the best browser. Sorry.

Nice. Very nice. But not as nice as *Internet Explorer*.
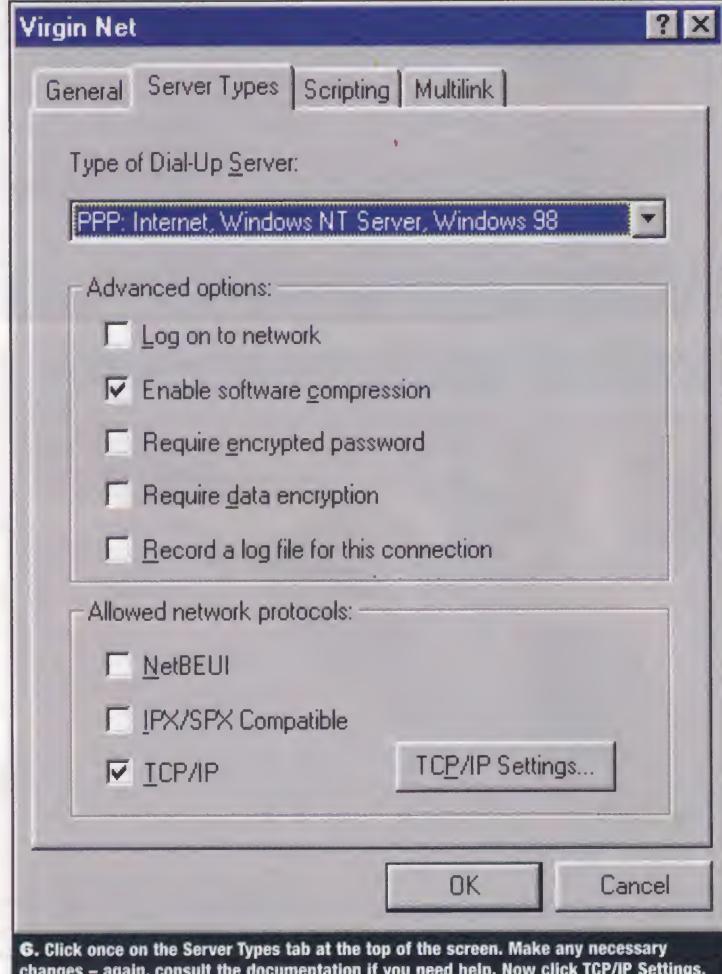
G. Click once on the Server Types tab at the top of the screen. Make any necessary changes – again, consult the documentation if you need help. Now click TCP/IP Settings.
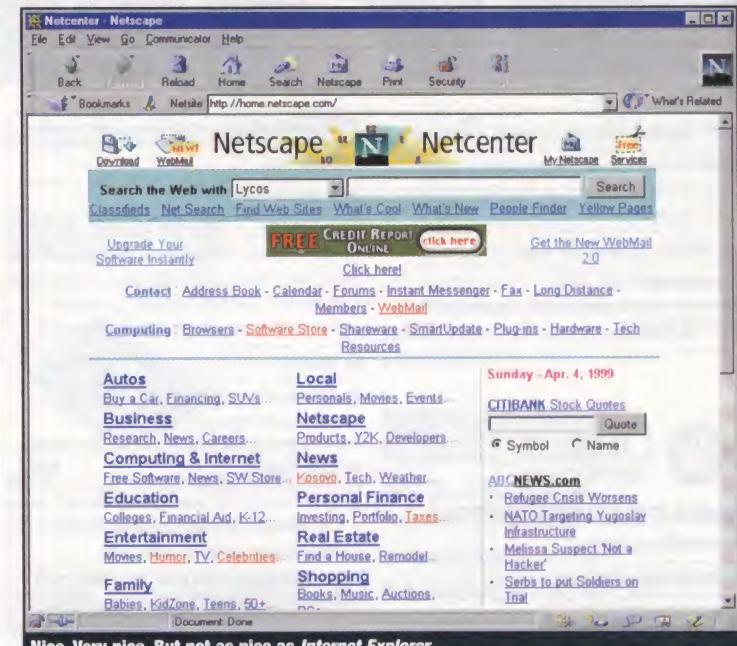
place to start as any – witness the plethora of useful links and information at www.freeserve.net. Click to visit pages and download any applications you fancy the look of (and anything else you fancy the look of, if that's your game). If something works, keep it. If it doesn't, bin it.

WEB BROWSER

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: ease of use, support, compatibility.

A browser is the graphical interface between you and the Web. It enables you to view Web pages, click on links and download stuff. Many of the latest browsers do pretty much everything – read and write email and newsgroups, connect to FTP sites, and more besides. So, if you're happy with the features offered by any one product, settle down and don't worry about duplicating its functionality with different software.

MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER V5
www.microsoft.com
FREE
Good all-rounder with the might of Microsoft behind it. Now getting more refined instead of radical with each update. The latest version 5.0 has only just been released.

PCZONE CHOICE
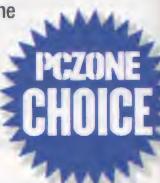
NETSCAPE COMMUNICATOR V4.51
www.netscape.com
FREE
Still trailing the field, and reckoned never to catch up with *Internet Explorer*. A good, solid product though, and the only real alternative to Bill Gates. Good support for email and newsgroups.
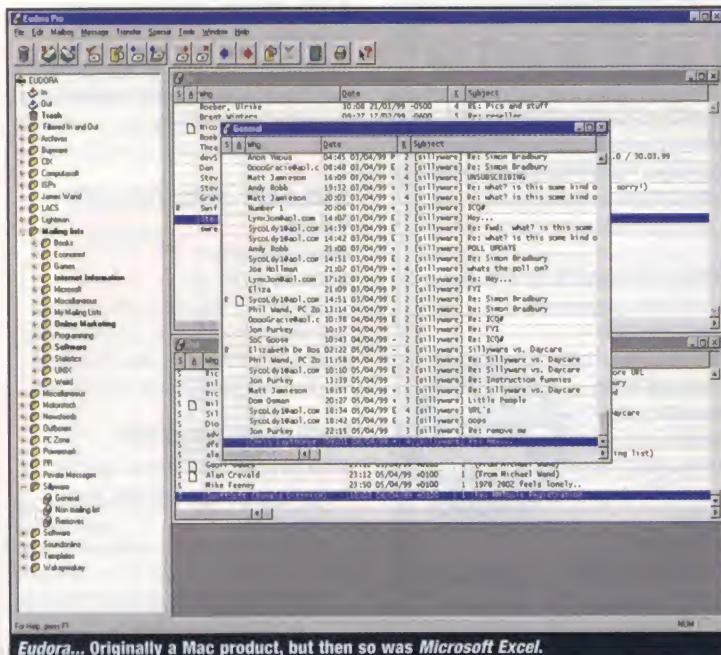
Eudora... Originally a Mac product, but then so was *Microsoft Excel*.
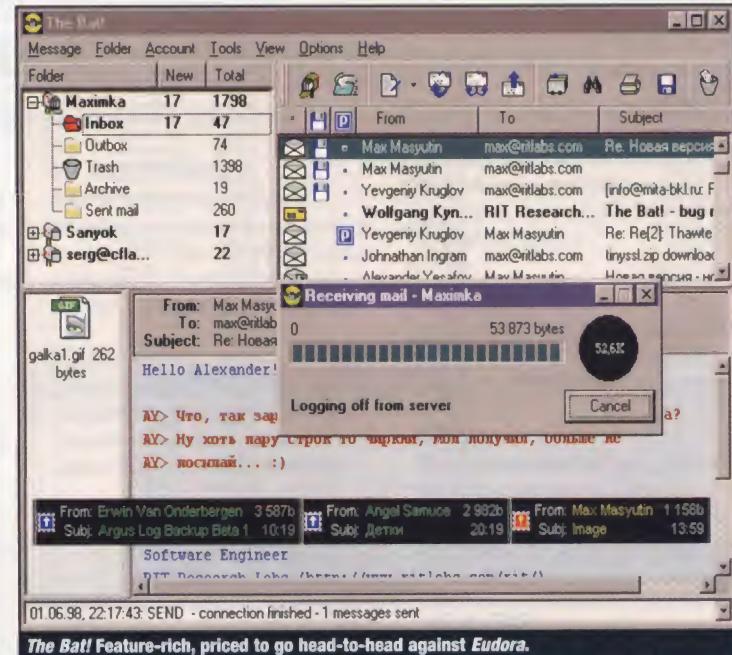
The Bat! Feature-rich, priced to go head-to-head against *Eudora*.
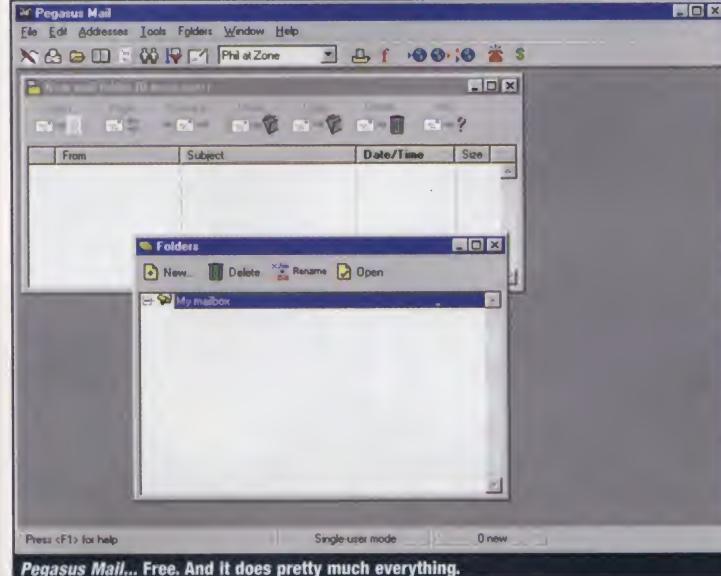
Pegasus Mail... Free. And it does pretty much everything.
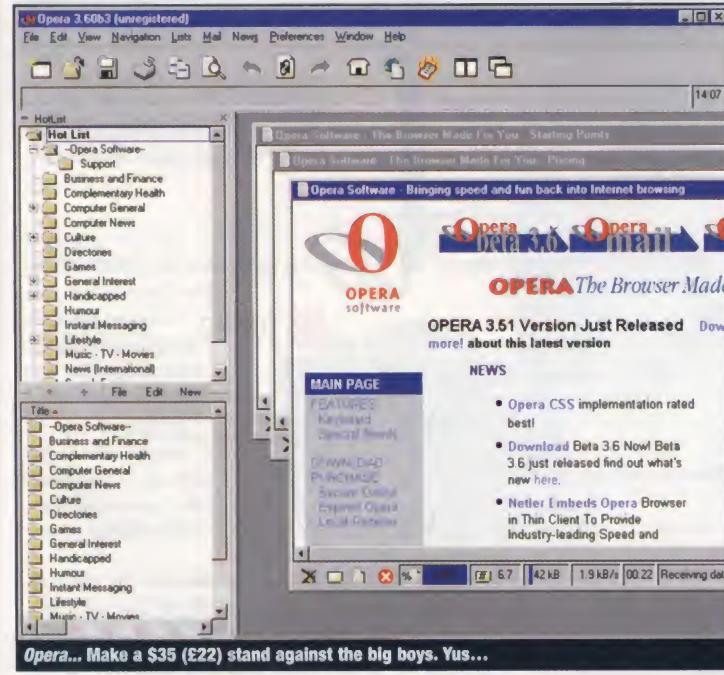
Opera... Make a $35 (£22) stand against the big boys. Yus...

OPERA V3.5
www.operasoftware.com
US$35 (£22)
Once the choice of geeks, *Opera* is now a serious alternative that adheres strictly to HTML rules and regulations. Easy to use and customisable, but with a price tag.

E-MAIL CLIENT
WHAT TO LOOK FOR: Ease of use, ubiquity.
Although the two heavyweight browsers come with full support for email, you may be less than impressed with the way they work. In which case, check out some of the dedicated clients, which are often a much better bet.

EUDORA V4.1
www.eudora.com
US$39 (£24)
Simple interface, powerful features, massive support. Does everything you want, with none of the frills so beloved of Microsoft. A freeware version is also available.

PCZONE CHOICE

PEGASUS MAIL V3.01D
www.pmail.gen.nz
FREE
Feature-rich mail client that doesn't cost a penny. Interface is slightly non-conformist and clunky, but worth checking out nonetheless.

THE BAT! V1.31
www.ritlabs.com/the_bat
US$35 (£22)
Priced to go head-on against *Eudora*, *The Bat!* has been collecting awards since its release. Innumerable features, great support, absurd name.

WHICH SET-UP?

There's a fair few choices on offer here. The obvious question is which ones to go for. Below we've outlined four types of 'Internet junkie' and the different set-ups they might be expected to go for...

1. COST NO OBJECT
Pace modem, because it's built in this country and repeatedly wins awards. CIX dial-up, because they're the nicest Internet people on the planet. *Internet Explorer, FTP Voyager, Eudora Pro 4.1* and *McAfee VirusScan*.

2. WORKSHY, LAYABOUT STUDENT
Sportster Winmodem, because they're cheap but cheerful. FreeServe dial-up, because it's free and does the job. *Internet Explorer, FTP Explorer, Pegasus Email* and *Trend Micro Housecall* when the need arises.

3. REGULAR USER
Hayes Accura, because it's a solid choice that won't go wrong. FreeServe dial-up, because it proves you don't need to spend money to get online. *Internet Explorer, FTP Voyager, The Bat!* mail client and *Norton Anti-Virus*.

4. GADGET FREAK
Hayes Accura, because it supports hands-free operation. Demon Internet dial-up, because they provide a static IP address. *Opera* browser, *FTP Voyager, Pegasus Email* because the author has a beard. And as for virus protection? This guy is more likely to aspire to writing them than to guarding against them.
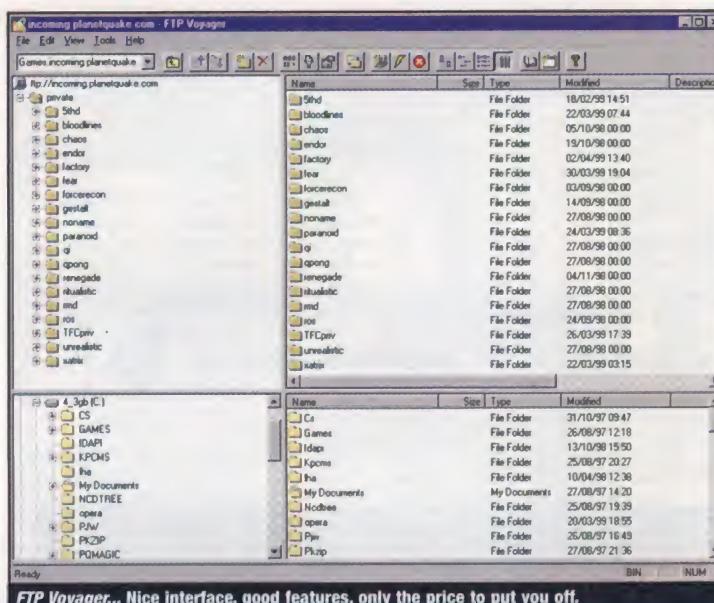
FTP Voyager... Nice interface, good features, only the price to put you off.
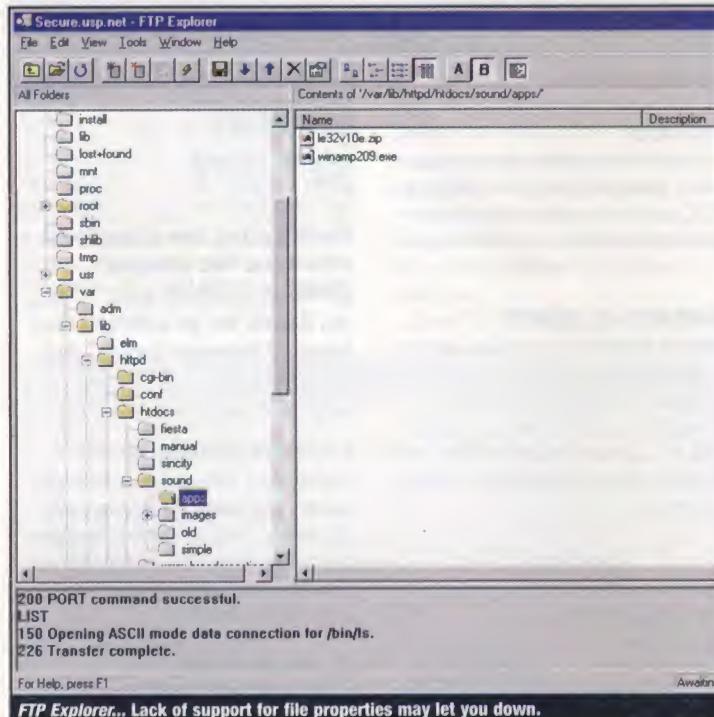
FTP Explorer... Lack of support for file properties may let you down.
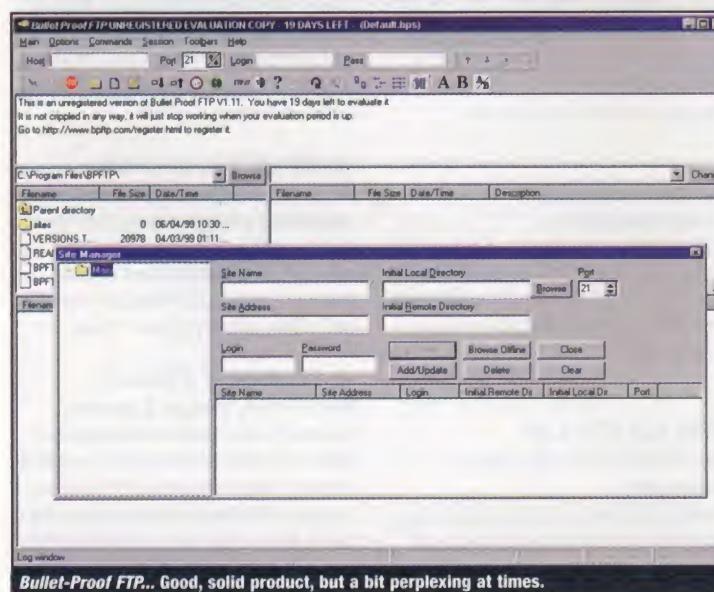
Bullet-Proof FTP... Good, solid product, but a bit perplexing at times.

← FTP CLIENT

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: Neat, easy interface, long feature list, kudos.

Your FTP client is used to transfer files to and from places on the Internet. If you're making a website, you use FTP to move your pages from where you designed them to the ISP's Web servers.

FTP VOYAGER V6.1
www.ftpvoyager.com
US$37.95 (£24)
Easily the pick of the bunch, but on the dear side. Includes all the options you'll ever need in a familiar, slick interface. Thirty-day free trial.

PCZONE CHOICE

FTP EXPLORER V1.0
www.ftpx.com
US$30 (£19)
Old-time favourite let down by poor support and lack of new versions.

BULLET-PROOF FTP V1.11
www.bpftp.com
US$29.95 (£19)
Reckoned to be one of the best, although the interface tries to cram a few too many features into too small a space. Excellent file-queuing system. Thirty-day free trial.

VIRUS CHECKER
WHAT TO LOOK FOR: Regular updates, comprehensive virus database, their success rates.

Viruses are a threat to everyone with an Internet connection – over 70 per cent of all
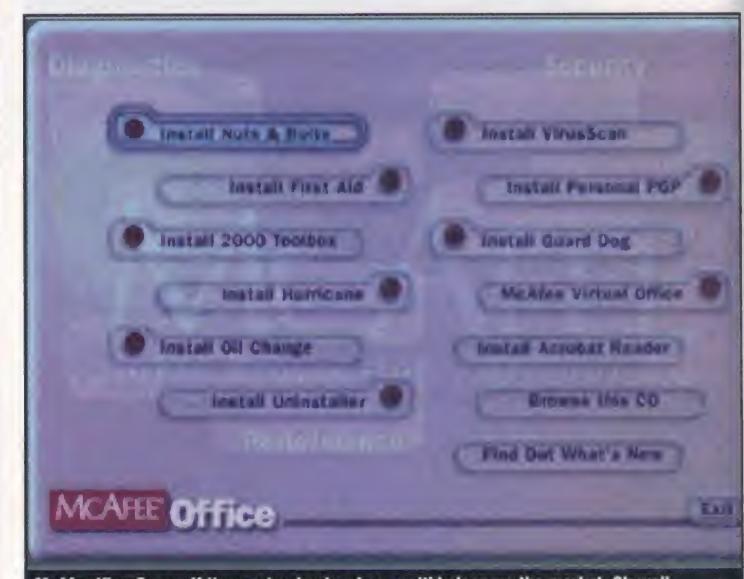
McAfee VirusScan... If it were ten bucks cheaper, it'd clean up the market. Oh well.
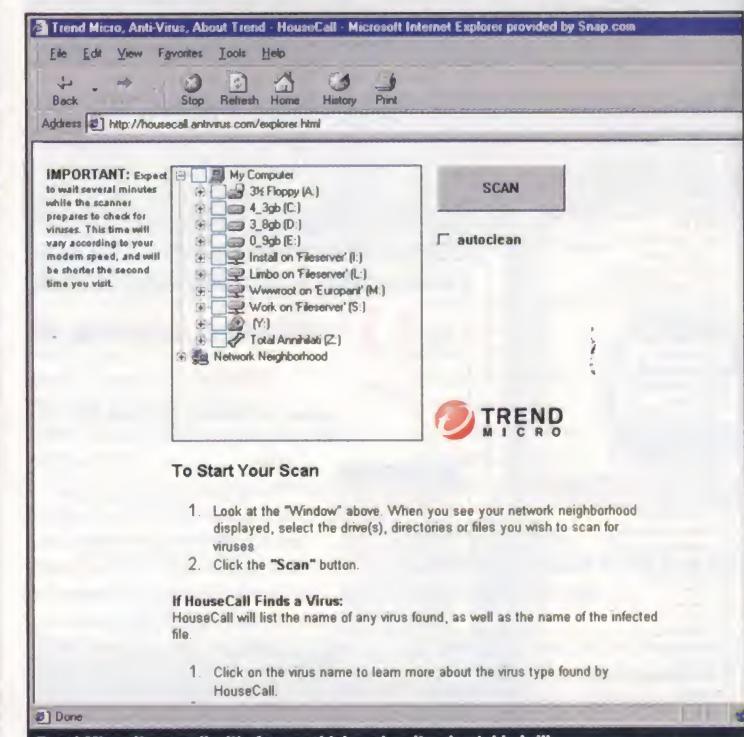
Trend Micro Housecall... It's free – which makes it unbeatably brill.

virus infections are transmitted via Internet downloads and email attachments. Never run any application (any file with a .com or .exe extension) or any Word document (any file with a .doc extension) without first running it through a virus checker.
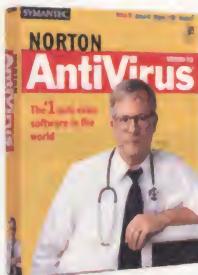
◯ Better than before, and it's now pick of the bunch.

NORTON ANTI-VIRUS V5.0
www.symantec.com
US$36 (£22)
Symantec's products are always top-notch and do what they claim to. Symantec also claim that *Norton Anti-Virus* is the world's best seller. Thirty-day free trial.

PCZONE CHOICE

MCAFEE VIRUS SCAN
www.mcafee.com
US$49.95 (£31)
The de facto standard that ships with Windows 98, *VirusScan* provides all the protection you need. More expensive than Norton's, but excellent protection. Thirty-day free trial.

TREND MICRO HOUSECALL
housecall.antivirus.com
FREE
An online scan performed via your Web browser. It's as alert as any retail product, and can clean infected files. You need an open Internet connection to do your checking. PCZ

◯ **NEXT MONTH:** *How to find games servers, and then how to join in with the fun; all you need to know about free gaming; how to develop smoother connections; what it takes to reduce lag; getting to know all about playing games over ICQ; and much more besides. Don't m iss it. On sale Thursday 3 June.*

◯ Armed with our starters guide, go on, get set up, and start exploring that unknown world of games going on out there.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Still a little baffled by the jargon surrounding the Net? It won't take long to build your knowledge

BANDWIDTH
Traditionally refers to data speed, but is more often associated with the size of files sent across the Internet – the larger the file, the more bandwidth you need to use.

BROWSER
Any application program displaying and interacting with information on the Web. The most popular browser is Microsoft's *Internet Explorer* (IE), followed by Netscape's *Communicator.*

CLIENT
The machine connecting to a remote server (cf. Server).

EMAIL
Electronic Mail. Refers to the exchange of messages, usually sent as straight text but sometimes with attached graphic images and/or sound clips. Your email address is a unique set of letters identifying the electronic box where you collect your mail.

FTP
File Transfer Protocol. The simplest way to exchange files between computers on the Internet. FTP is most commonly used to transfer Web-page files from the designer's machine to ISP servers.

HTTP
Hypertext Transfer Protocol. The universally adopted set of rules for exchanging electronic data across the Web.

INTERNET
The mother and father of all networks. A global network of networks in which users can retrieve or send information from or to any other computer connected to it. Try not to break it.

IP ADDRESS
A 32-bit number that uniquely identifies each machine connected to the Net. When your computer requests a Web page or sends email, your IP address is included in the message.

ISDN
A high-speed, digital alternative to a standard modem. A bit too expensive for gamers; usually used by corporates and small businesses.

ISP
Internet Service Provider. An organisation that provides access to the Internet and provides related services such as electronic mail and website hosting.

K56FLEX, KFLEX
Rockwell Corporation's K56flex gives a modem the capability to download data on ordinary phone lines at 56Kbps (cf. x2).

LAG, LATENCY
Refers to the time lag between the time a command is given by a remote computer, and when it is executed – a bit like playing a pipe organ in a large cathedral (cf. Ping).

MODEM
An abbreviation of MOdulator/ DEModular. Modems convert digital data into analog signals that can be sent over standard telephone lines.

MOO
A virtual environment similar to a MUD, but aimed at social interaction rather than at combat and quests. The word MOO derives from MUD: Object Oriented (cf. MUD).

MUD
An acronym formed from Multi User Dungeon. MUDs are text-based, real-time Internet games where users adopt roles and take part in simulated combat (cf. MOO).

ONLINE
Refers to the state of a computer when it is connected to a remote network, internet or ISP.

PING
The delay between the local remote machines, usually displayed in milliseconds. A higher ping means a larger delay and thus slower gameplay (cf. Lag).

SERVER
A remote server – for example, a website or games service (cf. Client).

URL
Uniform Resource Locator. A URL is simply a structured way of addressing a specific file on the internet. An HTTP URL (beginning http://) can be for any Web page; an FTP URL (beginning ftp://) can be for any FTP site. Other URL types include Usenet news (news://) and Gopher (gopher://).

USENET, NEWSGROUPS
Usenet is a collection of forum messages posted to servers on a worldwide network. Each forum is known as a newsgroup; there are thousands of them. Data is transferred using Network News Transfer Protocol (NNTP).

V.90
The adopted standard for transmitting downloaded data at 56,000 bits per second. The V.90 standard was created from the merging of x2 and K56flex. Most modems incorporating K56flex or x2 technology can be upgraded to the V.90 standard by getting a software update disk from the modem manufacturer (cf. x2; K56flex)

WORLD WIDE WEB, WWW
All the resources, machines, files, users and abusers that send and receive data using the standard HTTP (cf. HTTP).

X2
A technology developed by US Robotics to increase the speed of download information over regular phone lines. The system enables data transfer rates of up to 56,000 bits per second (56Kbps). x2 and K56flex has been replaced by the V.90 ITU standard (cf. K56flex).

DEAR WAZZA

Your techie problems and upgrade questions solved in a jiffy.
A bit like a padded envelope bag thing. Er, sort of

⭐ **ANSWERS** Warren Chrismas

> ❝I've managed to download CleanCIH, which finds the CIH virus and destroys it. And it's only 18K! I found that 300 of my files were infected!❞
>
> **RICHARD LAM**

A WARNING

Q Concerning the problem about the CIH virus in your April issue (*PCZ* #75). I've managed to download CleanCIH. It finds the virus and destroys it, and it's only 18K! I found that over 300 of my files were infected! You can download it from **www.pspl.com/download/cleancih.htm**.

Richard Lam

A We first warned readers of the potential threat of the CIH virus (also known as Win95.CIH, Win32.CIH, Spacefiller) in our October '98 issue (*PCZ* #68) and make no apologies for repeating the warning. Just because a particular virus isn't making the headlines any more, that doesn't mean it isn't still going around.

CIH most definitely is. Indeed, Electronic Arts are currently putting warning leaflets in with games which read: "Should you encounter any crash where the screen turns blue, involving either a 'Fatal Exception' or 'VXD error', your system may be infected with the CIH virus." It's probably worth pointing out that there are other possible reasons, of course, for these errors!

The CleanCIH program is a good, simple way of detecting and removing the CIH virus, but we still recommend that gamers purchase a full virus prevention package and, importantly, *update it regularly* (you can find trial versions of popular programs at **www.mcafee.com/**, **www.symantec.co.uk/** and **www.drsolomon.com/**).

The latest threat to gamers comes not from viruses, but from worm programs which have been doing the rounds via email and newsgroups. We've covered Melissa in Tech-Head (see page 32), but also watch out for one called for Happy99.

If you receive a message with a file called Happy99.exe (or similar) attached, DO NOT execute it. If you do, you'll see a little firework display, while behind the scenes it modifies your Winsock (WSOCK32.DLL) file. Once your machine is infected, a copy of the program is sent to everyone who you email – but without you knowing about it!

Happy99 is actually non-malicious and very easy to get rid off, but very irritating all the same. Full details on the worm (and how to get rid of it) at **www.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/happy99.worm.html**.

SLIGHT DOWNSIDE?

Q I have an annoying problem with games randomly crashing. I recently upgraded my Mitsubishi Apricot P120 with a 300MHz Intel Celeron processor and an extra 64Mb RAM.

I'm not sure what was actually done to my PC, but I think the basics were to install a new motherboard and cannibalise the good bits (hard drives, CD-ROM drive etc), then put it all back together in new case, which I am very pleased about. It not only makes it more powerful and faster, but also easier to upgrade in the future.

However, I've noticed a slight downside – all the games I've installed since the upgrade have faults. *Half-Life* won't let me access the menu after I've started a game, so I can only save games by using quick save (if I try to come out and save, I get a Fatal Exception error); my screensaver has a Fatal Exception error if I move the mouse to end it. I can't play *Tomb Raider III* for more than five minutes without it exiting back to Windows, and now *SimCity 3000*, which I purchased just last week, is randomly crashing.

Could you possibly throw some light on what might be causing this problem? All the games that were installed before I upgraded run perfectly fine. I hope it's not something serious, or expensive to fix. Incidentally, a friend suggested that if I upgrade to Windows 98 my problems could be solved. Is this true?

Steve Henningsen

A A "slight downside"? Jesus, we'd like to know what you'd consider to be a major problem. In non-technical terms your PC sounds... knackered. →

MICROSOFT'S SECRETS

Q I don't know whether you are already aware of them, but I have found two very useful utilities in the Windows\System directory of Windows 98.

The first is SFC. This System File Checker checks the integrity of your system files. If it finds a corrupt file, it copies the file from the Windows CD to restore it, which can save having to re-install Windows. It's useful if you start getting error messages.

The second is Msconfig. This enables you to specify what loads at start-up and also to get rid of annoying remnants of programs.

I don't know why Microsoft don't advertise the fact that these utilities are included on the CD, as I find them very useful.

Jonathan Rudge

A They are useful, Jonathan, yeah. We knew about Msconfig, but hadn't seen the System File Checker. We're sure there are many readers who haven't seen either of them, so £50 is on its way for your trouble. Easiest money you've ever earned, right?

Why don't Microsoft advertise features like these? Well, in fairness, I think they like to keep things simple. Msconfig is very useful to experienced users (especially those with start-up problems) but, like Regedit, it's really not the kind of program that 'ordinary' users should be playing around with. Obligatory *PC ZONE* disclaimer: use at your own risk.

System File Checker, however, is not only very useful but also pretty much idiot-proof. As you point out, Jon, it could save users from completely re-installing Windows after a serious system crash. Definitely a good thing, that.

System File Checker

System File Checker verifies the integrity of your system files.

Select an option and click Start.

○ _____
If a file is found to be corrupt, you will be prompted to restore the original file. By clicking Settings, System File Checker can also be configured to notify you of changed and deleted files.

○ _____
Specify the system file you would like to restore.

[_____]   [Browse]

Checking files...

████████████████

[Start]   [Cancel]   [Apply]

The Win98 System File Checker (our little secret though, okay?).

Sorry Robert, if you really want Windows 3.1 you're going to have to scour the second-hand ads.

We're a little perplexed as to why games which you'd previously installed still work and newly-installed games don't, although you might want to read the CIH virus warning above. Hey, you never know!

Leaving that aside, the most obvious issue here is the fact that you've seemingly upgraded a motherboard without re-installing Windows from scratch. Now you *can* get away with this sometimes but, for reasons too complex to go into, it's really not a very good idea. So, our advice is to go for a clean install of Windows (be it 95 or 98) and go from there.

SOUND ADVICE

Q I'm having problems with setting up my sound card for older games such as *Duke Nukem 3D*. I can't find out what the following settings are: interrupt (IRQ); 8-bit DMA channel; 16-bit DMA channel. I'm also not sure what make my sound card is.

We ran a guide to this in our October '98 (*PCZ #68*) issue (back issues are available from 017899 490215), but it's quite a complex task, so you may want to get an expert to it. Maybe the person who did your hardware upgrade? There again, maybe not…

Any ideas on how I can find all this stuff out?

Usexything)

A To find out the make and model of your sound card when running Windows, go to the Control Panel and select System. Now select Sound, Video and Game Controllers from the Device Manager. Your sound card should be listed here.

If you click on Resources, you can see which Interrupt and DMA settings are being used under Windows. If you run old games via the Windows desktop you should be able to use these settings without a problem.

If you're running games directly from DOS, things are a little trickier. You might want to open your Autoexec.bat file (in your root directory) and look for clues – ie a line which looks something like this: SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 H5 P330 E620 T6. In this case the memory address is 220, the IRQ is 5, the 8-bit DMA channel is 1, and the 16-bit DMA channel is 5. Yes, we know it's rather cryptic. God, how we miss DOS. Not.

SOFT SHELL

Q Regarding Dan Sloan's hatred of Microsoft in the April issue (*PCZ #75*). He might be interested in Litestep (**www.litestep.net**), a new shell for Microsoft Windows 9x.

While it isn't actually a Windows replacement, it does change the front end to a non-Microsoft explorer, which has many customisable options, transparent windows, pop-up menus etc.

One caveat, however, is that it's a complicated program, and

anybody who isn't happy messing around with their PC should stay well clear.

Richard Tibbles

A Hmm… hardly going to topple the great Gates empire, is it? Still, we're happy to pass on the recommendation, if only because you used the lovely word 'caveat'.

NO-WIN SITUATION

Q Do you know if any copies of Windows 3.1 are still on the market? I've tried to upgrade to Windows 95 but my computer can't find a file called setup.cab. If you know how to resolve this

problem, or know where I can get a copy of Windows 3.1, I would be grateful. My PC is a 486 with 16Mb and a four-speed CD-ROM drive. As far as I know this specification is alright.

Robert Darby

A We reckon the only place you're likely to find Windows 3.1 these days is in a computer or car boot fair. If you want to upgrade and haven't got any Win 3.1 disks (and you should have if it's installed on your machine), you need to buy and install the full version of Windows 95 rather than the Upgrade edition. Well that's probably the legally correct answer, anyway…

LARA SENSE?

Q The *Tomb Raider III* install problem ('Lara Help') in the April issue (*PCZ #75*) sounds like the problem I had with *Deathtrap Dungeon* (also from Eidos Interactive). Originally it would crash when I tried to install it, presumably because of the copy protection on the CD. I got it to work by setting the performance

> 66 **Do you know if any copies of Windows 3.1 are still on the market? I've tried to upgrade to Windows 95 but my computer can't find a file called setup.cab** 99
>
> **ROBERT DARBY**

properties of the CD-ROM drive to No Read-ahead.

Steve Fairbrother

A Really? That's interesting. It's certainly worth a go for anyone who thinks their CD-ROM drive has problems with certain copy protection systems.

To change to the CD-ROM drive settings as Steve suggests, select System from the Control Panel. Hit the Performance tag, then File System, then CD-ROM. Now change the Optimize Access Pattern For setting to No Read-ahead. Note: if it doesn't solve any problems, then you'd best put the setting back (probably to Quad-speed or higher). PCZ

DEAR MR ARMSTRONG…

Reader complains of 'crazy' hard drive. Several not-so-crazy readers reply

A In the letter headed Driving Me Crazy in your April issue (*PCZ #75*), Robert Armstrong mentions his hard drive going crazy every two hours. The reason for this is simple: he has Microsoft Office 95 or 97 installed on his machine. These versions of Office come with something called Find Fast. You can see a shortcut in the Start/Programs/Startup menu in Windows 95/98/NT. This application basically indexes files on your hard drive(s) so that when you search for documents they are accessed quicker.

To change the settings, run the Find Fast configuration tool from Control Panel. There are a few options to make this less obtrusive:
1) You can set the interval to a longer period of time, ie three or four hours.
2) You can select Pause Indexing from the menu.
3) You can remove each entry in the display, thus the indexing never occurs.
4) You can remove the shortcut from the Startup menu so the application never starts.

There you have it. I'm sure that this affects thousands of games players (it gets on my nerves

as well). This is definitely something that you want to amend, since it severely reduces frame rates when playing your favourite 3D shooters.

Tejinder Tagar

A We had loads and loads of letters regarding Robert's query, which were roughly split equally between those suffering from a similar problem and asking for help, and those offering reasons for it and also giving a solution.

The problem is nothing to do with virtual memory, as some of you suggested (he has 160Mb of RAM!), nor indeed is it a power management issue. As explained above by reader Tejinder Tagar, the problem is almost certainly down to using Microsoft's Find Fast application.

We should have guessed it ourselves, although in fairness we were rather misguided by Robert's use of the word 'crazy'. Whatever, there's nothing really to add to Tejinder's letter. Our thanks go to him, and to everyone else who wrote in on the issue.

Deathtrap Dungeon: Steve Fairbrother solves a crash problem.

WATCHDOG

Feel that sofware companies' definition of 'customer service' is totally at odds with yours? Don't get uptight, write to us – we'll sort 'em out

● ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

Fallout 2 virtually unplayable? Surely not?

LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, write to Dear Wazza (page 136).

WRITE TO Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

FALLOUT OVER FALLOUT 2

Q I'd just like to add my two pence worth on the issue of patches. Generally, I used to think that patches were a good thing – modern games are incredibly complex beasts, consisting of millions of lines of code. Anyone who has created a program of even moderate substance knows how tricky it can be to find and solve every little glitch. Given the complexity of games and the variety of PC set-ups available, it's understandable that some bugs slip through unnoticed during playtesting.

However, it seems that the situation is reaching ludicrous new heights as the months pass. Developers no longer seem to be concerned about the state of a game when it's shipped, and rely on patches to sort it all out afterwards. As outrageous as it seems, they're effectively using the buying public as a huge group of free playtesters.

One game in particular that has prompted this letter is *Fallout 2* (*PCZ* #71, 86%). I loved *Fallout* and looked forward to more of the same. I bought the game in early December and found it to be excellent. However, after about a week or so of playing, I looked at the *Fallout 2* website – apparently there were quite a few major bugs in the game, causing it to crash completely in the later stages. But there was a patch due out soon, and this would fix everything.

Unfortunately, this would not be compatible with saved games, so I would have to start again. Fair enough, I thought, I'll just wait for the patch. After a few weeks of waiting, a US patch has now finally appeared.

Unfortunately this will not work with my UK version, but a UK patch will apparently be along soon. Again, fair enough – there can't be that much difference in the patches, so surely it'll only be a few days in coming.

A week passed, then two, then three… Finally, about a month later, the UK patch surfaced. However, a quick skim through the website's bulletin board revealed that the patch simply causes more problems than it fixes.

The current situation is that I paid £35 for *Fallout 2*, but I couldn't play it for almost two months – it seemed pointless because of the apparent save-game issue. After waiting all this time for the patch, it appears that the game is still unplayable.

Contacting Black Isle/Interplay via email has yielded no results – I received an automated email aimed purely at the US market (adding insult to injury). I am furious at the handling of the situation, especially as many of the new bugs seem to be pretty obvious (they appear in the early stages of the game and are readily apparent). As I've had no luck in obtaining any statement from Black Isle or Interplay on the matter, I was hoping that you might have more luck.

Michael Franchetti

A We did have more luck, but it took a fair amount of time to get a response to the issues you've raised. We were eventually offered the following explanation: "The time between the US patch and UK/European patches was much longer than anticipated. This delay was caused by a number of reasons [such as] team members taking vacation at the end of the project [and] team members leaving. Work began on the patches just before Christmas, so the holidays got in the way too. It took the team longer to fix the bugs than anticipated."

Watchdog was also told that there are major differences between the US and UK/French and German versions of *Fallout 2*. Subsequently, all the patches had to be version-specific.

As for your allegations about the patch itself being buggy, they didn't offer any comment.

TURKISH UNDELIGHT

Q I don't understand why such a large company as Sierra has such poor customer support. A couple of months ago I tried to order *Swat 2* via the Internet. Sierra informed me that they were experiencing some problems with their international ordering service, and gave me a number to call to order it by phone instead.

Unfortunately I live in Turkey, and our international phone rates are a pain in the ass. Because I wanted the game so badly *(Wanting* Swat 2 *badly?! Surely some mistake – Ed)*, I decided to call them whatever the cost.

And then the trouble began. During my first call they took my details (address, credit card etc) and then put me on hold. For some reason the line then went dead (this all took ten minutes). I got through to another operator, who again took my details again and asked me to wait.

I waited for more than five minutes, and then *another* operator told me that they weren't shipping to Turkey. I got really mad, because Turkey is featured on their online order country list, and they could have warned me during the first phone call.

Subsequently, I have paid a lot of money for the phone calls, and couldn't buy the game anyway (and on later reading the review in *PC ZONE*, I was somewhat relieved that I couldn't). I have filled in a complaint form at their website but have not received an answer, so I decided to write to you. I think everyone should be aware that although Sierra's games are superb, their customer support sucks.

Robby Varon

A We dropped Sierra a line about the problems you've been experiencing and they offered the following response: "Sierra is very concerned that its customers are treated correctly, and we were therefore very disappointed to hear of this reader's experience. While we are confident that our online

REBATE REVELATION

It appears that a rebate is offered to gamers in some countries, but not to those in others

Q I remember a while ago that someone wrote into Watchdog to complain about the fact that DID's F-22 sim *Total Air War* was mostly *F-22: ADF*, yet it was being sold at full price and there was no rebate. I also remember that DID said it was out of their control and that it was Infogrames, not them, that weren't offering rebates for current owners of *ADF*. I've just found out that in Canada, if you send off proof of purchase for *ADF* and *TAW* you get a 25-dollar rebate. Why isn't it being offered anywhere else? Could you find out if there's any chance of Infogrames offering the rebate over here?

Bob Gilles

A An intriguing revelation that Watchdog took straight to the game's publisher. Michael Pattison,

senior product manager at Infogrames UK, offered the following explanation: "Price strategies vary from territory to territory, thus price strategies in each country do not come under the control of Infogrames United Kingdom. Any deal done by an independent source, be it a distributor or retailer in Canada (or any other country, for that matter), is carried out independently of Infogrames United Kingdom."

As to whether there's any chance of the alleged rebate scheme getting an airing over here: "A reduction in price of *Total Air War* for owners of *F-22 ADF* is not a UK strategy," stated Pattison, "as we know *Total Air War* to be a quality standalone product offering flight sim enthusiasts and gamers the chance to control an entire war."

So what do *PC ZONE* readers think? Let us know your thoughts on this.

F-22 ADF: where's our bloody rebate then, eh?

ordering system is very well organised and customer-friendly, we have been completely unable to get to the bottom of what exactly happened in this case."

Subsequently, the people at Sierra are prepared to offer you compensation for your troubles, Robby, namely two Sierra or Blizzard games of your choice. Watchdog has passed your details on to them. A result!

CREATIVE R CRUD?

Q I'll cut straight to the chase: Creative's support is garbage. I recently bought a 3DBlaster Banshee and tried to play *GTA* in its nice and shiny 3dfx mode. But what the feck? It says I haven't got a 3Dfx card. In that case, what have I just spent nearly £100 of hard-earned cash on? It's the same story with *Unreal*, but that just hangs due to glide errors.

After much digging, I found out that the 3DBlaster card does not work in 3dfx mode in resolutions less than 640x480. Seeing as how most games start at 512x382 that's a bit of a bastard. I read on the Net that Creative were releasing some new drivers in late Jan/ early Feb that addressed this problem. Can I find them? Can I hell.

I then emailed Creative several times and got absolutely no response. How many other companies think they're so high and mighty that they can ignore their customers?

I just want to know if these drivers were ever in the 'pipeline', and if so where can I find the bastards? If you can get hold of them, will you put them on your cover CD?

Matt

A When informed of your email problems, Creative were a tad confused. They say that it appears they didn't receive any correspondence from you, which would therefore explain the lack of response. "Perhaps Matt can forward a copy of the mail he sent to us or *PC ZONE*, with details of the address or

addresses he used, so that we can investigate exactly what happened," offered Claire O'Reilly, Creative's UK marketing manager. "We did 'lose' about 500 emails one day recently due to a system problem, but that would not explain why Matt has not had a response to any of the other emails he said he sent. The only explanation is that they went to the wrong address!"

Creative went on to say that they take pride in their service and technical support, and that you should have received a response with full details on where to get the relevant drivers.

In the meantime, here's the info you requested: "The driver update for this card is the file 3dbb9xup.exe which is suitable for Windows 95 and 98. It is available at www.cle.creaf.com/techknow/tech/ftp/ftp-3db.html. Mirror sites also exist at http://support.soundblaster.com/files/newfiles.asp#3dbb9xup.exe and www.creative-asia.com/support/drivers/.

> **"I recently downloaded the *Baldur's Gate* patch. Why is the 'rest of the world' patch 14Mb when the US patch is only 4Mb?"**
>
> **'COLMAG'**

This revision is a self-extracting archive and should be downloaded to a temporary folder on the hard disk drive and then run from within Windows. It contains both a software update and a BIOS update for the card. Refer to the README.TXT file for full installation instructions.

"Regarding game support, please test the card with the game supplied (*Incoming*) and see if this is behaving correctly. If you are experiencing specific problems with games (such as not recognising the presence of the card), chances are that the game needs a patch from the game supplier. A good site to obtain these from is www.3dfxmania.com/patches/. Alternatively, check the manufacturer's site for the

latest versions. There are patches available for *Unreal* which will enable the game to work, but unfortunately we couldn't locate a Voodoo2 patch for *GTA*, sorry."

Check out the *PC ZONE* cover CD for the relevant downloads.

BOWLED OVER BY BALDUR

Q Following on from other readers' letters, I recently downloaded the *Baldur's Gate* patch. Why is the 'rest of the world' patch 14Mb when the US patch is only 4Mb? Does this mean that more than two thirds of this 75-minute download is surplus to requirements? Also, the information about what the patch does is tucked away inside a huge text file, which you don't want to have to sift through while online – and when it comes to a download this big, you want to know what you're getting.

A final gripe is that on emailing Interplay to ask them about the size of the patch, the response you get is an automatic reply in the form of a huge FAQ. As if there aren't enough FAQs on the site already. I expected better service than that.

'Colmag'

A Interplay told us that the patch is intended as a 'one-stop shop' for Europeans wishing to upgrade the game. "The patch contains localised versions of the new rev," explained a spokesperson, "and is all contained in the one set-up package that updates speech and data files for each individual territory."

As for your gripe about their penchant for all things FAQ, they told us: "This is an automated response from our customer service department and is the easiest way of supplying accurate information in the most efficient manner."

Fair enough. **PCZ**

"I AM A NUMBER, NOT A PERSON"

Some computer suppliers need more than your name in order to follow up a query

Watchdog has been receiving an increasing number of complaints from readers about computer suppliers. If you have an axe to grind with the company you bought that pride and joy from, please remember to include purchase details such as reference/invoice numbers so we can chase them up immediately. Apparently some companies seem unable to search by your name alone.

Welcome to the *PC ZONE* Top 100. Here you'll find the games that in our expert opinion are the current top PC games in their field, as well as a few extras you might like to consider if you're a big fan of the genre

ACTION GAMES

QUAKE II   PCZ #59 • 97%
✪ The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "*Quake II* is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

HALF-LIFE   PCZ #71 • 95%
✪ Arriving a whole year late but definitely worth the wait, this has to be the 3D shooter of the year thanks to a superb single-player game. We'll have to wait and see whether it will beat *Quake II* in the deathmatch arena.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING   PCZ #44 • 94%
✪ The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442

FORSAKEN   PCZ #63 • 94%
✪ *Descent* is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.
PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000

WARGASM   PCZ #71 • 93%
✪ Famed for their flight sims, DID finally deliver an action game only they could produce. With helicopters, APCs, and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank game could be – and it's even better to share.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199

SHOGO: MOBILE
ARMOUR DIVISION   PCZ #71 • 92%
✪ Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this 3D action game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. With great graphical effects and an involving storyline, it's perhaps just a bit too easy for the *Quake* hard-core.
PUBLISHER Microids • 00331 4601 5401

SIN   PCZ #70 • 91%
✪ Until *Duke 4Ever* appears, *SiN* is the closest in feel to its ageing classic predecessor. Based on the *Quake II* engine, *SiN* offers a superb single-player game thanks to some ingenious level design. Highly recommended.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

TOMB RAIDER III   PCZ #72 • 91%
✪ There's a good chance that in 20 years' time the *Tomb Raider* 'thingy' will be looked upon with as much fondness as *Star Wars* is today. This third outing may not be as ground-breaking as its predecessor, but it's the best so far.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

JEDI KNIGHT/
MYSTERIES OF THE SITH   PCZ #74 • 90%
✪ As a double pack, this ageing 3D shooter and its expansion disk represents outstanding value for money. Dated graphics, but the level design is superb and the missions are some of the best ever made.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01895 4567000

STARSIEGE UNIVERSE   PCZ #76 • 88%
NEW ENTRY Just as *Earthsiege II* was equally as good as *MechWarrior II*, *Starsiege Universe* should easily stand up against *MechWarrior III*. And with the multiplayer-only *Tribes* chucked in, *Starsiege* is great value for money.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100
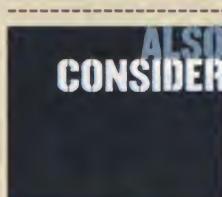
ALSO CONSIDER
THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT Eidos Interactive• PCZ #72 • 90%
TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 89%
UNREAL GT Interactive • PCZ #65 • 93%
QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% BUDGET
ALIENS VS PREDATOR Fox Interactive • PCZ #76 • 91%
MDK Interplay • PCZ #50 • 90%
LAST BRONX Sega • PCZ #62 • 87%

RACINGGAMES

CARMAGEDDON II — PCZ #69 • 95%
It's *that* game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.
PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308

TOCA 2 — PCZ #76 • 93%
NEWENTRY Codemasters have done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically it's not brilliant, but gameplay-wise it certainly is.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

COLIN MCRAE RALLY — PCZ #68 • 93%
Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MONACO GRAND PRIX — PCZ #69 • 92%
Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 081 944 9000

GRAND THEFT AUTO — PCZ #58 • 92%
This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.
PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011

NEED FOR SPEED III — PCZ #69 • 91%
Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *Need For Speed III*. Why? Because if avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MOTOCROSS MADNESS — PCZ #67 • 91%
An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Soon available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

MICRO MACHINES 3 — PCZ #64 • 90%
The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MOTORHEAD — PCZ #63 • 90%
With drop-dead graphics and a blistering frame rate, this is a ridiculously fast, fab-looking, intense racing experience. Add a great LAN-based option (Local Area Network) and *Motorhead* is the ace of arcade racers.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS — PCZ #69 • 90%
Papyrus, the makers of *NASCAR* and *IndyCar*, have put the danger back into Formula 1. If you fancy a challenge and the chance to go back to the teams and drivers of 1967, then buy this. You'll need a steering wheel though.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

ALSO CONSIDER
FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 MicroProse • PCZ #36 • 95%
SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psygnosis• PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET**
INTERSTATE 76: NITRO RIDERS Activision• PCZ #63 • 87%
TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP
Europress • PCZ #59 • 86% **BUDGET**
ULTIM@TE RACE PRO MicroProse • PCZ #62 • 88% **BUDGET**

SPORTSGAMES

LINKS LS — PCZ #43 • 94%
The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000
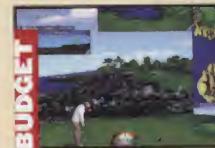
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF — PCZ #69 • 93%
Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. Without question, this is the best golf game yet.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

NHL 99 — PCZ #70 • 92%
The problem with all ice hockey games is the confusion that ensues after each ruck. *NHL 99* is no different in that respect, but updated graphics, enhanced AI and spiffy presentation make this game a must for fans of the sport.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97 — PCZ #53 • 92%
This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

FIFA 99 — PCZ #71 • 92%
Another biannual release from EA Sports that, as per usual, is better than the last. You'll have to think long and hard before shelling out another £40, but if you love footie it's well worth it for the best football game available for the PC.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION — PCZ #69 • 90%
It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being as instantly playable as *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

VIRTUAL POOL 2 — PCZ #58 • 90%
Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

THE GOLF PRO — PCZ #62 • 90%
If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links,* then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

ACTUA SOCCER 3 — PCZ #72 • 89%
Although better than last year's effort, *Actua 3* fails to snatch the title from EA this time around. Mind you, with a good range of options and a huge range of teams to play against, this certainly has a longer shelf life than *FIFA.*
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

NBA LIVE 99 — PCZ #73 • 87%
Being an EA Sports title, *NBA Live 99* is, unsurprisingly, the best game in its field. If you're a Sprite-drinking hoop fan, there's plenty here to justify shelling out for the annual upgrade. If you're not, you'll neither know nor care.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

ALSO CONSIDER
There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...
JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%
MADDEN NFL 99 EA Sports • PCZ #71 • 87%
TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%
BRIAN LARA CRICKET Codemasters • PCZ #75 • 85%

ADVENTURE GAMES

BIOFORGE
PCZ #25 · 95%

Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

SYSTEM SHOCK
PCZ #20 · 95%

This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

DISCWORLD II
PCZ #44 · 93%

Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis · 0151 282 3000

INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS
PCZ #37 · 93%

Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE · 0171 368 2255

LBA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY
PCZ #54 · 93%

Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

SAM & MAX
PCZ #11 · 93%

The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE · 0171 368 2255

RESIDENT EVIL II
PCZ #75 · 90%

Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore make for top entertainment. Be afraid. Be very afraid.
PUBLISHER Virgin · 0171 368 2255

MONKEY ISLAND ADVENTURE PACK
PCZ #74 · 90%

Monkey Island 1 and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision · 01985 4567000

GRIM FANDANGO
PCZ #71 · 90%

LucasArts not only do the best adventure games, but have also recently been doing the only adventure games worth buying. This latest has style written all over it, and hopefully signals a rosy future for fans of the genre.
PUBLISHER LucasArts · 0171 368 2255

KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY
PCZ #71 · 89%

To mark the genre's transition from point-and-click to a full 3D interface, Sierra's eighth *King's Quest* adventure proves an engaging stopgap, even if it is a little too Americanised. Good but not great.
PUBLISHER Sierra · 0118 920 9100

ALSO CONSIDER
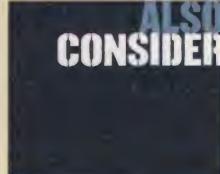
FULL THROTTLE Virgin · PCZ #27 · 92% **BUDGET**
THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE Virgin · PCZ #43 · 92%
REDGUARD Virgin · PCZ #75 · 89%
GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN Cendant · PCZ #36 · 88%
LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE Electronic Arts · PCZ #21 · 93% **BUDGET**

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS
PCZ #1 · 94%

This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA · 01753 549442

FINAL FANTASY VII
PCZ #66 · 93%

Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive ·0181 636 3000

REALMS OF THE HAUNTING
PCZ #47 · 93%

Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive · 0114 273 8601

LANDS OF LORE III
PCZ #74 · 90%

Westwood know how to tell a good story, and this latest in the series is the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LOLIII* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.
PUBLISHER Westwood/EA · 01753 549442

ULTIMA VII
PCZ #3 · 89%

Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA · 01753 549442

DIABLO
PCZ #48 · 88%

Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.
PUBLISHER Zablac/Blizzard · 01626 332233
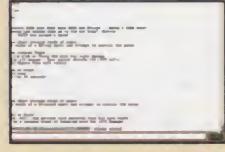
TERRIS
PCZ #44 · 88%

A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.
PUBLISHER AOL · 0800 279 7444
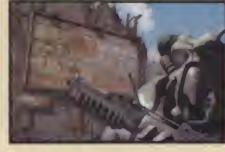
FALLOUT 2
PCZ #71 · 86%

Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you like the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper.
PUBLISHER Interplay · 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE
PCZ #73 · 85%

With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.
PUBLISHER Interplay · 01628 423666
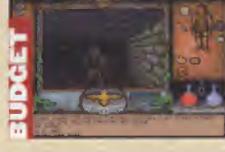
ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS
PRE-PC ZONE

This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA · 01753 549442

ALSO CONSIDER
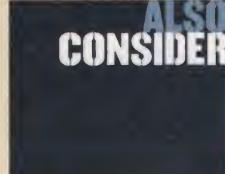
These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...

DIABLO: HELLFIRE Cendant · PCZ #59 · 82%
ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts · PCZ #62 · 90%
RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET Mindscape · PCZ #25 · 78%

STRATEGY GAMES

X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE   PCZ #52 • 95%
A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

AGE OF EMPIRES   PCZ #54 • 94%
Imagine *Civilization II*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3   PCZ #73 • 93%
No fancy graphics, no sound and no online multiplayer options do nothing to hide the fact that *Champ Manager 3* is one of the most addictive games you'll ever play. Forty quid for a season ticket to nirvana? Bloody bargain, mate.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING   PCZ #70 • 92%
The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MAGIC & MAYHEM   PCZ #70 • 92%
Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Mythos deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.
PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255

TOTAL ANNIHILATION   PCZ #56 • 92%
With a ridiculous number of units and its fast-paced action, *Total Annihilation* is without doubt one of the best real-time strategy games ever. The polygon units are smooth, and multiplayer games are awesome. Pisses on *Red Alert*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

SIMCITY 3000   PCZ #74 • 92%
Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.
PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442

SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI   PCZ #74 • 92%
Civilization II was, and still is, one of the greatest strategy games ever made, and *Alpha Centauri* is everything a true sequel should be. Rather than create another remake, Sid Meier has created the game *Civ* fans have been crying out for for years.
PUBLISHER Firaxis/EA • 01753 549442

WARZONE 2100   PCZ #75 • 90%
Both Westwood and Cavedog have dismissed full 3D in strategy games on the grounds that AI would suffer as a result of incorporating it. *Warzone* proves them both wrong, looks gorgeous and plays as good as *Total Annihilation*.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER   PCZ #75 • 89%
Replacing *Civ II* in this list with this remake was a difficult decision. *Call To Power* may do more than *Civ II*, but it takes too long to get into the guts of the game. You'll still love it, but if you're skint get *Civ II* on budget.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 4567000

ALSO CONSIDER
WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%
ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON Hasbro • PCZ #75 • 87%
COMMANDOS Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%
DUNGEON KEEPER Electronic Arts • PCZ #53 • 96% **BUDGET**
MASTER OF ORION 2 MicroProse • PCZ #45 • 92% **BUDGET**
COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT VIE• PCZ #47 • 94%
CAESAR III Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%
M1 TANK PLATOON II MicroProse • PCZ #63 • 90% **BUDGET**

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES

FALCON 4.0   PCZ #72 • 95%
After waiting literally years for this, the wait was worth it. With 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure, *Falcon 4.0* can fly against the best of them – and win. One of the best flight sims ever seen.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR   PCZ #68 • 95%
This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.
PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633

FLIGHT SIM 98   PCZ #55 • 94%
Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

APACHE HAVOC   PCZ #73 • 94%
Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one if you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* is the choice for fans whose preference swings the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. And the graphics are to die for.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

LONGBOW 2   PCZ #59 • 92%
"*Longbow 2* is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

JANE'S F-15   PCZ #64 • 92%
A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLYING CORPS GOLD   PCZ #59 • 92%
Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neato graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WW1 flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WW1 sim currently available.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

A-10 CUBA!   PCZ #59 • 90%
Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS   PCZ #72 • 90%
It's been a fierce dogfight to see who rules the WWII flight sim skies. *Jane's* combines realism with accessibility and ease, and although the game doesn't have a dynamic campaign feature its graphics make it a clear winner.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLIGHT UNLIMITED II   PCZ #60 • 84%
It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

ALSO CONSIDER
If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *Jetfighter III*. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...
AIR WARRIOR III Interactive Magic • PCZ #62 • 80%
F-16 AGGRESSOR Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%
COMANCHE GOLD NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%
F/A-18 KOREA Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

TECHNICAL SUPPORT 0113 234 0999
Monday to Friday 11am - 6pm
CUSTOMER SERVICE 0113 234 0666
Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm
SALES FAX 0113 234 0770
email GameplayUK@aol.com
website http://www.gameplay.uk.com

BUDGET GAMES

11th Hour + 7th Guest	£13.99
10 Cuba	£9.99
Actua Soccer Club Edition	£9.99
Addiction Pinball	£13.99
Armoured Fist 2.0 (Win '95)	£13.99
Battle Isle 2 & Data Disk/Battle Isle 3 ...each £9.99
Bedlam & Bugrider Double Pack	£5.99
Betrayal in Antara	£9.99
Boggle	£9.99
Broken Sword	£9.99
Cannon Fodder 2 + Dune 2	£13.99
Caesar 2	£9.99
Caesar's Palace	£9.99
Chessmaster 4000	£9.99
Chronicles of the Sword	£8.99
Civilisation	£9.99
Civil War General 1 or 2	£9.99
Conquest of the Empire	£9.99
Creatures Gold	£13.99
Cyberstorm 2	£9.99
Dark Eye	£8.99
Dark Forces	£12.99
Dark Reign	£9.99
Daytona USA	£13.99
Destruction Derby 1 or 2 ...EACH £13.99
Doom 2	£9.99
Dungeon Keeper Gold	£13.99
F2000	£6.99
F22 Lightning 2	£13.99
Fade to Black	£9.99
Fatal Racing	£9.99
Final Doom	£9.99
Formula 1 '97	£13.99
Gabriel Knight 1 & 2 ...EACH £13.99
G-Nome	£4.99
Grand Prix 2	£10.99
Hardcore 4X4	£6.99
Harvest of Souls	£9.99
Heavy Gear	£9.99
Imperium Galactica	£9.99
Interstate 76	£9.99
Jonah Lomu Rugby	£11.99
Journeyman Project 3	£9.99
Kings Quest 7	£9.99
Lands of Lore 2	£13.99
Lemmings Paintball + No More Lemmings + Lemmings 2 £14.99
Links LS	£13.99
Little Big Adventure 1 or 2	£13.99
Lords of Magic	£10.99
Mageslayer + Maximum Force Double Pack	£7.99
Magic the Gathering (Microprose)	£10.99
Master of Dimensions	£6.99
Masters of Orion	£10.99
Masters of Orion 2	£9.99
Masters of Orion 3 & Cynet	£12.99
Mech Warrior 2 or MW2 Mercenaries ...each £9.99
Micro Machines 2 Special Edition	£9.99
Mortal Kombat 3	£9.99
NASCAR Racing & Track Pack	£9.99
NASCAR 2	£10.99
Network Q Rally	£9.99
Nitro Racers	£5.99
Nuclear Strike	£13.99
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	£10.99
Outpost 2	£9.99
Panzer General 2	£9.99
Pete Sampras Tennis	£11.99
Phantasmagoria 2	£13.99
POD Gold (Includes extra tracks)	£13.99
Police Quest SWAT	£9.99
Privateer 2: The Darkening	£13.99
Quake	£9.99
Return to Zork	£7.99
Road Rash	£9.99
Sam & Max Hit the Road + Day of the Tentacle £13.99
Scorcher	£4.99
Screamer or Screamer 2	£9.99
Sega Rally	£13.99
Shadow Warrior	£14.99
Sid Meier's Gettysburg	£13.99
Sim City 2000 Network edition	£9.99
Space Hulk 2: VOTBA	£10.99
Star Trek: Next Generation A Final Unity	£9.99
Super Puzzle Fighter 2	£9.99
Syndicate Wars	£13.99
Tex Murphy Overseer - Under a Killing Moon 2 £12.99
Theme Hospital	£13.99
Theme Park	£13.99
Time Commando	£8.99
Tomb Raider & Unfinished Business	£13.99
Top Gun	£10.99
Total Annihilation	£12.99
Total Annihilation Disk: Core Contingency	£18.99
Transport Tycoon & World Editor	£9.99
Ultima 8	£13.99
Ultim@te Race	£9.99
Ultimate Soccer Manager 2	£9.99
Virtua Cop/Virtua Fighter ...EACH £13.99
Virus	£7.99
VR Powerboat Racing	£9.99
Warcraft 2	£10.99
Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat	£9.99
Wing Commander 3	£8.99
Worms United	£10.99
X Com: Apocalypse	£10.99
X Com: Terror from the Deep	£10.99
X Wing Collection + Rebel Assault	£13.99
Z	£9.99
Zork Grand Inquisitor	£9.99
Zork Nemesis	£9.99

CHILDREN & EDUCATION

This is just a small selection of our educational range. Please call for a quote if you do not see what you are looking for.

DORLING KINDERSLEY

Bananas in Pyjamas	£15.99
Castle Explorer	£14.99
Castle Explorer/Dinosaur Hunter Bundle	£24.99
Chronicle of 20th Century	£21.99
Encyclopedia of Nature 2	£22.99
Encyclopedia of Science 1/Nature 1 ...EACH £12.99
Encyclopedia of Science 2	£22.99
Encyclopedia of Space & Universe	£24.99
History of the World 2	£23.99
My First Amazing World Explorer 2	£17.99
My First Incredible Amazing Dictionary	£16.99
Redshift 3	£22.99
Ultimate Human Body 2	£23.99
Virtual Reality Dinosaur Hunter	£17.99

ACACIA GCSE REVISE AND KS3 TEST FOR SUCCESS
EACH PACKAGE CAN BE CUSTOMISED TO SUIT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ABILITY AND ALLOW YOU TO SELECT THE APPROPRIATE EXAM BOARD AND SYLLABUS. ALL ARE WRITTEN BY PRACTISING TEACHERS. THE MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED RANGE OF EDUCATION AIDS.

GCSE Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Biology & Geography ...EACH £12.99
Keystage 3 Maths, Science, Geography each £15.99

DISNEY

WE STOCK THE FULL RANGE OF DISNEY CD ROM TITLES AT SOME OF THE CHEAPEST PRICES IN BRITAIN! PLEASE CALL FOR PRICES!

BRODERBUND

Green Eggs & Ham/Harry & the Haunted House each £17.99
Logical Journey of the Zoombinis	£23.99
Maths Workshop	£23.99

MICROSOFT

Barney Goes to the Circus/Under the Sea each £17.99
Creative Writer 2	£24.99
Magic Schoolbus Range ...EACH £24.99

OTHERS

ADI Boo Read & Count 4-5/6-7yrs	£18.99
ADI English & Maths Years 3-10 ...EACH £21.99
Barbie Cool Looks Fashion Designer	£26.99
Barbie Riding School	£24.99
BBC Teletubbies/Pingu ...EACH £20.99
Freddie 3	£16.99
Muppets Treasure Island	£18.99
Playmobil Range ...EACH £24.99
Print Artist V4 (Sierra)	£17.99
Simpson's Cartoon Studio	£19.99
Virtual Springfield	£18.99
Winnie the Witch/A Fish Who Could Wish	£9.99

SPEAKERS

Screenbeat Maxim 120
120 Watts PMPO, Surround Sound, Loudness Bass System, Full Range Tone Control, Power Supply. £27.99

Screenbeat Top 25
Sits on any monitor, 25W Peak Power, Bass Booster. £8.99

Maxim Woofer
300W PMPO, Active Sound, Dynamic Bass Super Woofer, 3D Surround, Satellite Speakers, Power Supply. £59.99

MILLENIUM BUG

Are you ready for the Millenium? The One Stop Test and Fix system is easy to install and costs just £17.99. You will then have total peace of mind that your system is safe. And that's 100% GUARANTEED.

HOME & REFERENCE

MICROSOFT SPECIAL OFFERS

	RRP	OFFER
Microsoft 3D Movie Maker	£29.99	£14.99
Autoroute '99	£59.99	£50.99
Bookshelf '99	£49.99	£40.99
Cinemania '97	£29.99	£14.99
Dangerous Creatures	£29.99	£10.99
Encarta World Atlas '99	£39.99	£24.99
Encarta '97		£14.99
Encarta '99 Standard	£29.99	£25.99
Encarta '99 Deluxe	£49.99	£40.99
Encarta 99 Ref Suite DVD	£99.99	£69.99
Greetings Workshop	£39.99	£33.99
Money '99	£29.99	£25.99
Office '97 Pro	£399.99	£189.99
Plus (For Windows '98)	£49.99	£35.99
Publisher '95 Deluxe	£79.99	£34.99
Student Office '97		£119.99
Student Publisher	£49.99	£39.99
Student Works	£49.99	£39.99
Windows '98	£99.99	£75.99
Wine Guide	£49.99	£10.99
Word '97	£59.99	£39.99
Works V4.5	£59.99	£29.99

UTILITIES

First Aid '98 for Windows '95	£26.99
First Aid Deluxe '97 for Windows '95	£29.99
First Aid Deluxe '98 for Windows '95	£29.99
McAfee VirusScan V3	£24.99
Norton Antivirus 4 Gold	£24.99
Norton Uninstall	£17.99
Norton Utilities V2	£22.99
Norton Utilities Gold	£25.99
Nuts & Bolts	£19.99
That's What I Call Help! - First Aid '97, Norton Antivirus, Windelete, Powerdesk, Handyman £29.99

LANGUAGE

Berlitz Think & Talk Range
French/German/Spanish/Italian or Japanese ...EACH £19.99

Language Assistant (Translator) - FROM OR INTO FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH OR ITALIAN ...EACH £26.99

JOYSTICKS & PADS

CH Game Card	£25.99
Gravis Analogue Pro Joystick	£19.99
Gravis Gamepad	£16.99
Gravis Gamepad **Pro**	£22.99
Gravis Xterminator Pro	£31.99
Suncom F-15E Talon	£44.99
Suncom G-Force Plus Yoke	£34.99
Microsoft Sidewinder "Precision" Pro	£44.99
Microsoft Sidewinder Freestyle Pro	£43.99
Microsoft Sidewinder Force Feedback	£84.99
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad	£24.99

ALFA TWIN AUTO-SWITCH & 2 PLAYER ADAPTOR
A SPLITTER CABLE WITH A DIFFERENCE! COMPATIBLE WITH WIN '95 AND DOS AND ALL JOYSTICKS/PADS, THE ALFA QUAD ALLOWS 2 DEVICES TO BE CONNECTED TO ONE JOYSTICK PORT. 7FT LONG LEAD. £14.99

THRUSTMASTER PRODUCTS

FORMULA 1 RACING WHEEL & PEDALS ASSEMBLY
COMES WITH STEERING WHEEL, GEARSHIFT + PEDALS
RRP £124.99 OUR PRICE £99.99
FORCE FEEDBACK VERSION £119.99

THRUSTMASTER F1 SPRINT STEERING WHEEL
RRP £54.99 OUR PRICE £46.99

Maximise performance & responsiveness with a Thrustmaster ACM Game Card £21.99

F-16 FLCS Joystick - FEATURES FOUR 4-WAY HATS, 3 BUTTONS, DUAL STAGE TRIGGER & PADDLE SWITCH	£109.99
F-16 TQS Throttle - TRUE REPLICA OF F-16 THROTTLE QUAD-RANT SYSTEM. FEATURES TARGETING CURSOR CONTROL, TWO DIALS, TWO 3-POSITION SWITCHES & 4-WAY RADIO SWITCH	£109.99
Attack Throttle	£42.99
F-22 Joystick	£129.99
X Fighter Joystick	£38.99
Elite Rudder Pedals	£49.99
Top Gun Official Joystick - 4 WAY HAT SWITCH, WEIGHTED BASE, 3 BEVELED BUTTONS, QUICK ACTION TRIGGER	£28.99
Thrustmaster Flight Pack - INCLUDES TOP GUN JOYSTICK, ATTACK THROTTLE & ELITE PEDALS	£119.99

SAITEK PRODUCTS

X36 Flightstick & Throttle Pack - UNARGUABLY THE BEST BUNDLE AVAILABLE! EXCELLENT REVIEWS FROM ALL MAGAZINES, EVERY FEATURE CONCEIVABLE - CALL FOR MORE INFO £74.99

PC Bash Command Pad - BRILLIANT NEW CONCEPT IN GAMES CONTROL ALLOWS YOU TO PLAY AND MASTER COMPLEX GAMES MORE EASILY. SIMPLY TOUCH THE PICTURE TO CONTROL THE GAME! FULLY PROGRAMMABLE, 8 WAY THUMB PAD £29.99

Megapad MX632M - 8 BUTTONS, INDIVIDUAL TURBO AND AUTO-FIRE SELECT, LED, AUTO-CALIBRATING, 15 PIN £14.99

Saitek Acemaster 18 - 4 MICROSWITCHED FIRE BUTTONS WITH TURBO-FIRE, HAT SWITCH, SEPERATE THROTTLE LEVER, PROTEIN RUBBER GRIP £21.99

R4 Racing Wheel & Pedals - EASY CLAMPING SYSTEM, 10" PADDED WHEEL, RATIO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, GEAR STICK AND SHIFT PADDLES £69.99 WITH FORCE FEEDBACK £99.99

Cyborg 3D Stick - 24 PROGRAMMABLE ACTIONS, LEFT OR RIGHT HANDED, HAT SWITCH, 3D TWIST FUNCTION AND 3 HANDLE ADJUSTMENTS TO ALLOW YOU TO MAKE IT FIT YOUR HAND PERFECTLY! £34.99

Saitek X36F Programmable Flightstick	£44.99
Saitek X35F Throttle Rudder System	£34.99

VRF1 Xcelerator Analogue Wheel and Pedals Plus Network Q Rally & Int'l Rally Championship £29.99

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK WHEEL
POWERFUL FORCE FEEDBACK FACILITY!
RUBBER GRIP STEERING WHEEL WITH 8 BUTTONS!
QUICK LOCK DESK CLAMP!
INCLUDES MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS & CART PRECISION RACING!
COMPLETE WITH STURDY PEDALS!
SPECIAL OFFER!! £99.99
RRP £149.99

F1 SIM COMPACT WHEEL
Hand-stitched replica F1 10" steering wheel with realistic torque action. Gear change functions on steering column, 2 programmable buttons. Durable plastic pedals. £59.99

Space Orb 360°
10/10 - PC Home £29.99

Get Half-Life for just £10 at the same time!

visit www.spacetec.com for more info....

In REAL-LIFE, you don't think about HOW to move... you just do it. Shouldn't it be the same in your 3D games? Break the barrier of clunky linear 2D keyboard, mouse and joystick play with full-blown 6-axis 360° control in any and every direction. Perform outrageous combo moves like circle strafes, diving rolls, swat moves and the indefensible death blossom... moves impossible with the keyboard, mouse or joystick. Recommended for all 3D games, e.g. Quake, Tomb Raider, Forsaken, Unreal. This is also the only controller **directly compatible with all laptops.**

Hint Books

Age of Empires Solutions	£12.99
Caesar 3 Official Guide	£16.99
Discworld Official Guide	£18.99
Falcon 4 Official Guide	£16.99
Final Fantasy 7 Guide	£14.99
Grim Fandango Guide	£15.99
Half-Life Strategy Guide	£15.99
Internet for Dummies V4	£18.99
MS Combat Flight Sim Guide	£16.99
MS Flight Sim 98 Moves	£16.99
Rainbow 6 Strategy Guide	£16.99
Riven Unauthorised Secrets	£6.99
Settlers 3 Strategy Guide	£15.99
Sim City 3000 Strats & Sols	£15.99
Tomb Raider 2 or 3 Official	£10.99
Windows '98 for Dummies	£18.99
X Com: Apocalypse Guide	£15.99

SUPPLIER OF COMPUTER GAMES!
GUARANTEE!

ON THE CD

This month's CD is packed with great demos, including the cracking *Kingpin,* which rules with an iron grip

⭐ **WORDS** Mark Hill **DISKMEISTER** Daniel Emery

DEMOS + SHAREWARE

ON THE CD

HALF-LIFE: TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

Valve Software

EXTENDED PLAY SPECIAL

This is definitely one of this month's highlight. Experience *Team Fortress Classic* in all its *Half-Life* glory. This is the chance to get even more out of the instant Sierra classic and one of the finest multiplayer add-ons you can get. Check out Extended Play on page 150.

The *Team Fortress Classic* patch: you'll be blown away.

Half-Life in a new lease of life shock.

The team gets ready for a night on the town.

Don't hit her, she's on your side.

KINGPIN

Interplay/Xatrix

Shock, shock, horror, horror, it's a gangsta's paradise. Check out the game that tries its very best to outrage you with a charming mix of swearing, violence and superb graphics (see review on page 76). It's dark, grim, gritty and more realistic than the usual alien blasters out there, but it's still an opportunity to do things you'd never do in real life (we hope). It's not all mindless brain bashing though – remember that people run away or attack you if you approach them waving a lead pipe. And you won't get anywhere unless you talk to them. Apologies if you're offended by all the bleeping. 3D card only.

Controls:	Mouse/keyboard
MOUSE	Turn left/right, look up/down
CTRL/MOUSE 1	Attack
A	Step left
D	Step right
ALT	Sidestep
PGDN	Look up
DEL	Look down
END	Centre view
SPACE	Up/jump
C	Down/crouch
TAB	Inventory
/	Next weapon
ENTER	Use item
[/]	Previous/next item
F	Activate (use with crouch to search bodies)
G	Holster
F5	HUD
R	Reload

Talking controls:

Y	Yes/positive/follow me
X	No/negative/insult/hold position
Q	Attack desired target

➲ "You talkin' to me?"

You won't find any green alien blood in this game.

Share a pipe with this friendly fellow.

3D shooters will never be the same again.

X-WING ALLIANCE
LucasArts

Star Wars isn't just a film series, it's a religion. And as the Second Coming (aka the *Phantom Menace*) approaches, here's the answer to all your prayers: the chance to fly the Millennium Falcon. You can either jump right into your holy mission with the Quickstart option, or listen to a detailed briefing first. Be sure to move all the loose wires in the cockpit out of the way and bash your console if your hyperdrive doesn't work. There'll be other ships to help you blast the enemy to smithereens, so you're not on your own. Thank Lucas for that. (See game review on page 82.)

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

R	Target nearest enemy craft
E	Target nearest attacking
O	Target nearest objective
T	Cycle forward through targets
N	Next Hyperspace buoy
BACKSPACE	Full throttle
SPACE	Hyperdrive
[	One third throttle
W	Switch weapon systems
X	Lock turret cannon forward
G	Go to gunner turret
F	Turret to fire at current target
F9	Adjust cannon recharge rate
F10	Adjust shield recharge rate
F11	Preset #1
F12	Preset #2
'	Transfer laser energy to shields

WILD METAL COUNTRY
Gremlin/DMA

Good old-fashioned gameplay and furiously up-to-date graphics mean you'll love this arcade blaster – as long as you have a D3D card and a bucketful of patience. Controlling the tanks can be a tad frustrating to begin with, but as soon as you get used to it you're swinging your turret all over the place. There are passive and combat modes available, and we suggest you practice on the first before you meet some wild metal enemies. (See game review on page 88.)

Controls: Keyboard/joystick

5/6	Left/right tank track forward
2/3	Left/right tank track backwards
ENTER	Handbrake
A/S	Turn turret left/right
SPACE	Raise turret (firing is automatic on release)
LEFT CTRL	Drop mines
R	Call rescue helicopter
RIGHT SHIFT	Toggle scanner
ESC	Options
Q/W	Extra camera control

NORTH VS SOUTH
i-Magic

Experience the blood and guts of American history from the safe position of master strategist as you control either the Union or the Confederates in the Battle of Brandy Station. In this demo, the Union army has to win by turn 14.

Controls: Mouse

APACHE HAVOC
Empire/Razorworks

Some people feel right at home with realistic flight sims, while others prefer to sit in a home-made jacuzzi of piranhas. If you're one of the former, jump into the American Apache Longbow or the Russian Havoc and get those rotors whizzing. We suggest you take a look at the readme file for a more in-depth list of the controls.

Controls: Keyboard/joystick

R	Rotor brake engage/disengage
B	Wheel brakes
=/-	Increase/decrease collective
CURSORS	Cyclic
Z	Tail rotor left
X	Tail rotor right
T	Trim
G	Auto-pilot
H	Hover-hold
BACKSPACE	Select next weapon
SPACE	Fire weapon
ENTER	Toggle cockpits/menus
F1-F11	Select views
INSERT	Ground radar
HOME	Air radar

STARSHOT: SPACE CIRCUS FEVER
Infogrames

Playing a star juggler from space circus sounds exactly like what you'd do in a French game converted from the N64. Expect lots of jumping around on a very colourful alien planet. And watch out for the great red shark.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

CURSORS	Forward/back/left/right
SHIFT	Run
CTRL	Fire
ALT	Jump/fly
NUM ENTER	Talk/action

GRUNTZ
Monolith

Looking like a cross between the *Teletubbies* and *Warcraft 2*, *Gruntz* is the perfect antidote for all those who need to recover from *Kingpin* (reviewed on page 76). The gameplay is a *Lemmings*-style 'find the warpstone and take it to the king Grunt'-type of puzzler. Don't say we didn't warn you.

Controls: Mouse

POOL SHARK
Gremlin

If you fancy yourself as a bit of a hustler with a clear preference for the colour of money, line up your cue to this six-ball demo. But be careful, your opponent is a seven-foot, bald trucker with dangerous wrist movement.

Controls: Mouse

MOUSE RIGHT	Line up shot
MOUSE LEFT	Take shot

DRAGON CASTLE
Freeware

Don't count on fantastic visuals in this flying dragon sim, but where else can you flap massive red wings and burp fireballs? And, anyway, it's free.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

MOUSE LEFT	Fire
MOUSE RIGHT	Land (when close enough to the ground)
X/Z	Accelerate/slow down
F	Flares
A	Aim
S	Look around

DEMONSTAR
Mountain King Studios

Take a trip back to the days when *Space Invaders* ruled the arcade roost, and *Galaga* had armies of followers. You know what to do: scroll up the

---

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

It's time to start practicing for the UK's biggest games tournament (details on page 34)

On the CD you can find essential files for two of the featured games – *Age Of Empires* and *Quake II*. For the other titles to be played (see page 34 for the complete list) you just need the original games.

1 First of all run the self-extracting file, which puts two files into your c:\temp\pgc99 directory.

2 The .scn File is the UKPCGC *Age Of Empires* map that will be used in the regional qualifiers. Place it in the scenario directory of the *Age Of Empires* main directory. Read the manual for full instructions.

3 The gladq2091.zip file contains the files needed to run Gladiator bots. First of all create a directory called gladiator in your *Quake II* game directory, then extract the zipped file to it.

4 Now run the Winbspc.exe program. Select 'file' from the menu bar, then 'convert'. You need to find the pak1.pak file in your quake2/baseq2 directory and select all the .bsp files therein. Click on OK, and keep to the default conversion settings. Specify the gladiator

directory you created earlier as the output directory. The *Quake II* deathmatch levels are now converted into the .aas format that the Gladiator Bot program can recognise.

5 Quit out of all programs and run *Quake II* with the command line: Quake2.exe +set game gladiator +set deathmatch 1 +map q2dm8. This is the map to be used in the qualifiers. Feel free to practice on the others.

6 Bring down the console (using the ` key) and type 'menu' and press Return

7 Press ` to exit the console. Using the menu you can add up to eight bots to your game.

8 Read the readme.htm and winbspc.htm files in your gladiator directory for more information.

9 Remember: it's the q2dm8 map that will be used in the regional qualifiers. Championship settings for the bots is being finalised at the time of writiing, but there'll be four of them in a 20-minute deathmatch, each as hard as nails.

Hone your skills against a *Quake II* bot.

screen, destroying everything in your path and collecting power-ups. And never lift your finger off the Fire button. This is a shareware game.

Controls:	Keyboard
CTRL	Shoot
SPACE	Mega-bomb
ALT-X	Quit game

Z	Turret left
X	Turret right
H	Horn
V	Rear view
A	Handbrake
C	Change camera
ESC	Menu

LIVEWIRE
SCI
After an intro reminiscent of *Toy Story* on acid, complete with a groovy soundtrack, you're plunged into a weird 3D *Pacman*-style race against time. The goal is complete board domination. To achieve it you have to beat your opponents and evade the monsters. Luckily there are some bonuses to pick up along the way.

Controls:	Keyboard
CURSORS	Left/right/forward/back
W	Options

TANK RACER
Grolier Interactive
If you've ever driven down the M25 and wished you had a tank to bulldoze over traffic jams and blast annoying drivers, you'll appreciate this one. *Tank Racer* is about as arcadey as racers get. It doesn't matter what you crash into or what you run through. And don't waste your time trying to explode cows and sheep – they're only cardboard cut-outs.

| Controls: | Keyboard/gamepad |
| CURSORS | Left/right/accelerate/brake |

STREET WARS: CONSTRUCTOR UNDERWORLD
Studio 3
Fans of the original *Constructor* will know what to do. For the rest of you, this is a strategy game played for laughs. Just follow the on-screen instructions and use your men to build and expand. The first mission involves building a soup kitchen next to your headquarters. (See game preview on page 56.)

| Controls: | Mouse |

SPORTS CAR GT
Electronic Arts
In this demo you can test drive a Porsche, a Panoz and a BMW. The Porsche is the beginner's choice as it's much easier to handle than the other two, but you pay the price in engine power. Give the Lime Rock track a practice whirl in each of the cars and you're ready to tackle a full race in no time.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad
CURSORS	Left/right/accelerate/reverse
V	Cycle through the available camera views
B	Cycle through cars
O	Takes you back to your car
BACKSPACE	Rear view

EXTENDED PLAY
Get more out of the games you already own (also see Extended Play on page 150)

JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II
We've got five new maps for the much-loved *Star Wars* game. Arm yourself with a trusty lightsaber and commend yourself to the Force as you battle the Dark Side.

STARSIEGE: TRIBES
We've included all the latest updates as well as the new bots add-on. This is one of the most popular multiplayer games in the world right now, so you'd better give your machine a hefty upgrade if you want to compete on level terms.

QUAKE II
Here are 15 new missions for all those who've completed the original five times over. We at *ZONE* still play this on a regular basis, and we're sure you do too.

PATCHES
Don't miss out on all the new patches that have been released. See our CD browser for explanations of what they do.

BLOOD 2.0 TO 2.01
CAESAR III 1.0.1.0.1
DEAD RECKONING (DirectX 6.0 fix)
DELTA FORCE
GANGSTERS PATCH 2
IMPERIALISM II V1.02
KINGS QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY 1.0.0.3
LINKS LS 99 1.20
MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER 1.1 TO 1.2.1
PLAYER MANAGER 98/98 1.4

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON
SETTLERS III 1.32
SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION 2.X TO 2.2
SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI 2.0
SIN 1.01 TO 1.04
STARCRAFT 1.05
STARCRAFT BROOD WAR 1.05
STARSIEGE: TRIBES
FIELD & STREAM: TROPHY BUCK 1.0.0.6
WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS 1.08

EDITORIAL
We couldn't fit this stuff anywhere else, so we've put it here

Tips *PC ZONE'S* massive hints and cheats database continues to grow

CM3 update This is the first in a series of unofficial player updates for *Championship Manager 3*. To use, extract the files to the xxxx/data directory, where xxxx is the name of your CM3 directory. You have to start a new game for the changes to take effect. Note that neither *PC ZONE* nor the update's author can be held responsible for any loss of data that may occur when using these files.

HotShots Sit back and watch the movies of *Dark Reign II* and *Rally Championship 99*

Half-Life: The Drug Barons Read our interview with the creator Phil Daniels on page 39, and play his awesome *Half-Life* single-player level pack

Watchdog The latest *Unreal* Patch and 3D Blaster Banshee drivers (see page 138).

ADDED EXTRAS
Check out this month's selection of tools and utilities

DirectX 6.1
Microsoft's latest drivers for most Windows 95/98 games.
EZDe21sk 1.8
Saves the position of your Windows 95/98 desktop shortcuts and folders.
FileView v2.1
Hex/ASCII viewer for binary files.
Hypersnap-DX Pro v3.20.00
Screen-capture utility that can cope with DiretX/Direct 3D and 3Dfx modes.
Scitech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.
Winzip 7.0
The ultimate zip utility for Windows.
Ameol v2.50
Brand new software for the excellent online service that is CIX.
Kali95 1.63
Latest version of the client software for playing games over the Internet.
Compuserve 2.6a
Try this free for a month and get flying

on the Net.
TimeOnline v1.10e
Simple and effective way to track your Net time.
GetRight 3.3.3
Salvage broken downloads. New version.
ICQ 99a beta v2.13b
Client software for the best online chat service in the world.
GameSpy 2.08
Find all the latest servers playing your favourite games.

ClaraNET
Sign up files for ClaraNET. Requires IE4.
AOLpress
Website-building utility that's simple to use and very powerful.
Voodoo drivers
Make sure all the latest games work with your 3dfx card.
Wireplay Client
The software that connects you to Wireplay, plus *Air Attack*, *Legal Crime* and *Towers Of Fallow* to play with.

EXTENDED PLAY

Half-Life is a game like no other. With *Team Fortress Classic*, you won't want to play anything else. Ever again. Watch out for being bleary-eyed at 3am

⭐ WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF

ON THE CD On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 146.

Stunned one guy, shot the other, and invaded their base. Sooo exciting!

Two heavy weapons guys duke it out.

TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

➕ **Give Half-Life even more life with this unmissable add-on**

A magnificent blend of action, tactics, scheming and trickery, *TFC* is a habit-forming add-on that will transform your online gaming experience and make your phone bill look like Godzilla's inside leg measurement. Using the proven *Half-Life* engine as a framework, it enables you to play any of nine unique player classes, use countless new weapons and exploit a raft of team features. What's more, it's free. And it's on this month's cover CD.

To install, just double-click on the executable file to begin upgrading your existing copy of *Half-Life*. Then kick off your

Internet connection and double-click on the new *Team Fortress Classic* icon in your Start Menu. Don't worry, nearly all the 'regular' *Half-Life* controls and settings are carried over; those you don't like you can change. And if you're concerned about laggy games over the Internet, we've found that *TFC* is 20 to 40 per cent quicker than before (simple maps, uncomplicated textures and bandwidth-friendly guns are a few of the reasons behind this).

So what's it all about? Easy: teamwork. Steal the enemy's flag while guarding yours; help your friends to spring ambushes; set traps; if you're a medic, go around making sure everyone's healthy (or inject a contagious virus into enemy troops); if you're an

engineer, build sentry guns to deter intruders; go undercover as a spy and infiltrate the opposing team; get the demolition man to booby trap your flag, or the sniper to pick off troops from the other side of the map.

With five fab game variations and concurrent release of the *Half-Life* SDK (Software Development Kit) ensuring hundreds of new mods and missions, *Team Fortress Classic* is nothing short of obligatory. We *demand* you install it.

An enemy spy legs it to his base – with our flag, the thieving bastard.

The *Team Fortress Classic* cast of characters.

TOP TEN LITTLE-KNOWN TRICKS

Don't hang around trying to work things out, take a look at these tips...

1. ARMOUR KING
The engineer can repair any friendly player's armour – simply hit them with your wrench.

2. ENDOCRINE GLANDS
The medic can administer an adrenalin boost simply by increasing a player's health beyond his usual maximum.

3. SPY VS SPY
Your scouts and spies can uncover enemy spies just by touching them.

4. YOU KILL ME
To change class, hit 'B', make your choice and then type 'kill' in the console.

5. DROP DEAD
If you're a spy, press the 'H' key to feign death, and get out of all sorts of trouble.

6. INTRUDER ALERT
Friendly troops don't leak when you shoot them. Keep an eye out for blood splatters from potential spies.

7. UNDERCOVER AGENT
If you're a spy, enemy sentry guns don't spot you. Go for it.

8. WHERE IS IT?
Press the 'I' key to see the location of both you and your enemy's flags.

9. LEG IT
Get scouts to make the run back-to-back after you've got the flag. Press 'C' to give it to them.

10. I'M DYING!
Hit the 'Z' key to call for help – a medic or an engineer comes to assist you.

PLAYER CLASSES

Pick your team, choose who you'll be, then go get the enemy. We've outlined each teamplayer's attributes to get you started

SCOUT

SPEED: Very fast
ARMOUR: Very low
WEAPONS:
1. Crowbar
2. Shotgun
4. Nailgun
GRENADES: Concussion, caltrop
SPECIAL SKILL: Display flag status
TIPS: Scouts are a team's best bet for capturing the enemy flag, because they move twice as fast as everyone else. Dash in, zig-zagging like crazy, and head straight for the flag room. Once you've got the offending item tucked away inside your backpack, turn and leg it. Don't stop, especially not to fight – you'll only end up as mincemeat. Always yell for assistance (the 'U' key talks to your team only) if you need it.

SNIPER

SPEED: Medium
ARMOUR: Very low
WEAPONS:
1. Crowbar
2. Sniper rifle
3. Auto rifle
4. Nailgun
GRENADE: Hand
SPECIAL SKILL: Toggle rifle zoom
TIPS: Snipers hang back at base or on battlements and pick off enemy scouts when they turn up for the flag. The sniper rifle is 'charged up' the

longer you hold the fire button, and a single shot to the head on three seconds boost will kill anyone. The downside is little – in the way of armour and a stupid hat.

SOLDIER

SPEED: Slow
ARMOUR: Heavy
WEAPONS:
1. Crowbar
2. Shotgun
3. Super-shotgun
5. Rocket launcher
GRENADES: Hand , nail
SPECIAL SKILL: Reload
TIPS: Soldiers don't do anything particularly exciting, which is why you don't see many of them running around the map. Those who know how to use them, though, tend to have the upper hand. Lots of armour and ultra-fast rocket reloads means he's great for guarding the flag room, and his nail grenades are one of the best toys in the game.

DEMOLITIONS MAN

SPEED: Medium
ARMOUR: Medium
WEAPONS:
1. Crowbar
2. Shotgun
4. Grenade launcher
5. Pipe bomb launcher
GRENADES: Hand, mirv
SPECIAL SKILL: Detonate pipe bombs; set det-pack
TIPS: If you like stuff that goes bang, you'll want to marry the demo man. His launcher fires

grenades that bounce round corners – perfect for taking out hidden sentry guns or snipers – and the pipe bomb mode enables you to booby-trap areas of the map. The mirv grenade explodes into smaller grenades for that special multiple death moment. Not only that, press the 'M' key to set a five-second detonation bomb that can actually blow a hole in the enemy base and make it easier to get to the flag. Fab!

MEDIC

SPEED: Fast
ARMOUR: Medium
WEAPONS:
1. Medikit/bio-weapon
2. Shotgun
3. Super-shotgun
5. Super-nailgun
GRENADES: Hand, concussion
SPECIAL SKILL: Select Medikit
TIPS: Medics heal anyone and everything. If you're suffering from concussion or a virus, press the 'Z' key to yell for a Medic and get cured. And if you want to actually transmit a virus, just walk up to an enemy player and press the 'fire' key with your medikit selected – he'll instantly start moaning and groaning and spraying blood. Unless he gets cured by a medic on his team, he'll die – and infect anyone else near him in the process.

HEAVY WEAPONS GUY

SPEED: Very slow
ARMOUR: Extremely heavy

WEAPONS:
1. Crowbar
2. Shotgun
3. Super-shotgun
5. Assault cannon
GRENADES: Hand, mirv
SPECIAL SKILL: Select assault cannon
TIPS: Excellent for defensive positions, the HW guy is a tank. With tons of armour and an assault cannon ripped straight off the side of an Apache chopper, the kick-back brings him to a virtual standstill when firing. Two of these buggers after you and you'll be cut to shreds in no time. The only way round is if you're a fast-moving scout, when you can dodge their fire and be round the corner before they've even fired the first shot.

ENGINEER

SPEED: Medium
ARMOUR: Light
WEAPONS:
1. Spanner
2. Railgun
3. Super-shotgun
GRENADES: Hand, EMP
SPECIAL SKILL: Open Build menu
TIPS: These chaps are the glue that holds a team together. They can build sentry guns and ammo/armour dispensers. The guns are an essential part of any base defence, and every team needs at least one engineer on their side. The railgun he wields is clumsy but effective, and the super-shotgun is more than adequate. He's also the only one to have EMP grenades which detonate anything explosive close to them – sit back and watch the fireworks when you manage to snag a heavy weapons guy.

PYRO

SPEED: Medium
ARMOUR: Good
WEAPONS:
1. Crowbar
2. Shotgun
4. Flame-thrower
5. Incendiary cannon
GRENADES: Hand, napalm
SPECIAL SKILL: Select flame-thrower
TIPS: The easiest way to befuddle your enemy is to have a couple of pyros charging into a base, setting everyone on fire as they go. Anyone burning to death will find it difficult to aim, and the flames licking around them cut their vision down to near zero. The incendiary cannon is effectively another rocket launcher, travelling slowly but having a much larger blast radius than the soldier's weaponry.

SPY

SPEED: Medium
ARMOUR: Light
WEAPONS:
1. Knife
2. Tranquillizer gun
3. Super-shotgun
4. Nailgun
GRENADES: Hand, hallucinogenic
SPECIAL SKILL: Open Disguise menu
TIPS: The spy can disguise himself as any opponent player, enabling easy access to heavily fortified bases. Even the sentry guns ignore you. And if you can creep up behind an enemy player, your knife will kill him instantly. The hallucinogenic grenade is a top plaything, causing confusion among your opponents as they start to see and hear things that aren't there.

One of the scenes from homebrew level *Slaughtership* – generally reckoned to be the best single player Quake II map ever.

The world's top *Quake II* single-player maps, new *Jedi Knight* arenas, and Bot support for *Starsiege: Tribes*. Is there any better way to fill up your hard drive?

QUAKE II
✪ The World's Best Single-Player Quake II Maps
Looking back through past issues, it occurred to us that we'd never 'done' *Quake* maps. And there are a few good reasons for this. First, it's the most played game in the history of anything, meaning most people now just switch off when they read about it (they really have been there, done that, and got entrails all over their T-shirts). Second, there are a million maps freely available on the Internet, so what's the point? Well, actually, that *is* the point. Go to any *Quake* site and chances are that you're presented with more than 300 downloads. With the average file weighing in at over 2Mb, it'd take you precisely… let me see now… 7,000 years (!) before you managed to snag them all. And since Extended Play is supposed to save you the bother of trawling around for decent stuff, here are what we reckon to be the top 15 *Quake II* single-player arenas. Don't say we never do anything for you.

⬆ Near perfection. Honest.

✪ SLAUGHTERSHIP
(SLAUGHTERSHIP.ZIP) Amazing architecture, object placement, lighting… Everything about this map makes us believe it's from iD, and not some lone hack with a map editor. It's also miles ahead of the rest for the way it lulls us into a false sense of security before flooding the room with heavily armed alien tossers hell-bent on our demise.

⬆ Good layout, great sounds.

✪ ON SACRED GROUND
(ONSACREDGROUND.ZIP) Set in the confines of a Strogg temple, the idea is to find their sacred crystal, reveal a bad dude called Jorg and then splat him and the crystal. The map looks astonishing, and you'll find yourself wandering around with your mouth open (no change there, then). There are lots of rooms to explore, lots of good fights and… Well, just play it and find out, okay?

⬆ A real adventure.

✪ DEFIANCE
(DEFIANCE.ZIP) A full six maps featuring a lavish banquet of spot-on textures, sounds, rides in carts, and amazing attention to detail. There are waterfalls, lavafalls, superb scripted sequences, and plenty of secret areas to hunt out. The only downside is that it's a bit of a challenge – just you try and concentrate when it's 4.30am and the birds are tweeting.

⬆ Giddyap, yee haw and stuff.

✪ DRY GULCH
(DRYGULCH.ZIP) Step into a time warp and head back to the Old West. This is one of those maps that shows off the astonishing power and flexibility of the *Quake* engine, with textures, sounds and ambience that's a million miles from the original game. Our only criticism is that, because of the tight theme, only the shotgun, super-shotgun and machine-gun make an appearance.

⬆ Mad action, great map.

✪ FORCES OF EVIL 1
(FOE1.ZIP) Set before the events of the main *Quake II* game, and seeing you fighting off Strogg attacks back on Earth, *Forces Of Evil* represents frantic action from start to finish. Where other maps have slow moments to enable you to explore, this one keeps on throwing the stuff at you. It also links nicely to the sequel, which we reckon is almost as good.

⬆ *Forces of Evil 2* is not quite so hectic as *Dry Gulch*, but still good.

✪ FORCES OF EVIL 2
(FOE2.ZIP) Following on from the precise moment that *Forces Of Evil 1* leaves off, you're instantly back in the action (although not quite so much of it). This time the scene is set in and around a mansion, and the theme is as strong as that in *Dry Gulch*. You'll find the same iD-like craftsmanship throughout, making it another classic. *Forces Of Evil 3* is due out soon.

⬆ Back to work with you.

✪ STRUCTURAL MECHANICS DIVISION
(SMD.ZIP) Set in an office-like environment, you're tasked with setting off a series of explosives and saving the whole of humankind. The office is simply astonishing: PCs, overhead projectors, even a working photocopier. Some of the traps are nasty in the extreme and help to keep the adrenalin flowing. Our only problem was a Windows 98 machine that simply refused to run it.

⬆ *Widening Gyre*: Sir Christopher Wren, eat your heart out.

✪ THE WIDENING GYRE
(WIDENING.ZIP) The one thing that really sticks in our minds about this map is the architecture – it makes you believe the guy who wrote the map had an honours degree in the subject. Aside from the stylish feel, *The Widening Gyre* is enormous, fast-paced, and should keep you busy for some time. Trivia snippet for you: the author was hired by Broderbund to work on *Prince Of Persia 3D*.

⬆ *Ghost Town 2*: where's John Wayne when you need him?

✪ GHOST TOWN 2
(GHOST2.ZIP) We're back in the Old West again, although this time you find yourself in a rundown town infested with battalions of Strogg soldiers. There are a whole bunch of secret areas to track down (supposedly 15, but we could only find 12) and all manner of hints to the theme – saloon bars and upright pianos, to name but two. The non-linear layout is great for the explorers among you.

1964 Complete: spellbinding atmosphere, but a bit too difficult.

✪ 1964 COMPLETE

(1964COM.ZIP) Eight maps of mayhem, and difficult mayhem at that. Early instalments see little or no weaponry, zero ammunition and too many Strogg soldiers. But for some reason you keep coming back for more, and later maps reward you with bucketloads of ambience and chilling architectural styles. The only complaint is a lack of ammunition and health.

Old-fashioned *Quake* action.

✪ MY LAST FLESH

(MYLASTFLESH.ZIP) Proof, as if it were needed, of the dosh in game design. Here's another map from another author who has just been snapped up by a major name to create levels for them. Anyway, this one is a real classic *Quake*, with heaps of action, uncomplicated layout, sneaky enemy placement and a great ending. It's also got a good name to boot.

Touchdown is full of surprises and frightening moments.

✪ TOUCHDOWN

(TOUCH.ZIP) Like *The Widening Gyre*, this map is full of astonishingly beautiful buildings and courtyards. Even though it's one of the older single-player experiences out there, it still manages to pull its weight with truly frightening moments, great contraptions and superb layout. The only problem is that there's no real plot, and thus there's a diluted feel to the whole arena.

Unrivalled Strogg placement.

✪ INFOKILL

(INFOKILL.ZIP) A real challenge for the masochists among you. Strogg soldiers lurk in weird and wonderful places, and they'll start to pick you off before you've taken ten steps forward. As with all the maps here, the layout and feel is equal to or above the level set by iD. The end battle is mad, and makes you wish there was a little more health about.

Six massive maps of fun.

✪ THE PRODUCTION COMPLEX

(TPC.ZIP) This one will keep you busy for some time with its six big maps. Actually, 'big' doesn't cover it – they're huge. And each one is full of majestic, sweeping arenas and imposing buildings. The textures are right and the lighting is right, although we found two instances of ye olde Hall Of Mirrors glitch which killed some of the atmosphere.

Three maps, good story, fun.

✪ CASTLES OF STROGGOS

(CASTLES.ZIP) Last but by no means least, this one is full of ideas and surprises. The layout and design is top-notch, but one area saw us trapped where we couldn't get out, which is a bit daft. The level of action is just about right, and we reckon you'll come back for at least two more goes before leaving it alone.

JEDI KNIGHT
✪ New maps for LucasArts' atmospheric classic

We've had a look at several *Jedi Knight* tools in the past, but never actually at the levels themselves. Unlike *Half-Life* or *Quake*, they're pretty hard to come by, and many simply don't make the grade. Why that is we're not sure, especially as the editing packages are as powerful as those for any other game. It's probably all down to the *Star Wars* licensing. Even though it's one of the best (and soon to be also one of the most popular) films of all time, you become a social outcast the moment you admit to liking it. Yet another one of life's little ironies.

Adullum: fun although tiring.

✪ ADULLUM

(ADULLUM.ZIP) A good one for you Imperial-haters, this map enables non-stop slaughter from the moment you kick off. On several occasions it gets a bit exhausting,

and you can feel the plumbing in your head banging away long after you've turned off your PC and clambered into bed. The architecture and layout isn't a patch on some top-rated *Quake II* maps, but nevertheless it's fun.

Fun. But don't ask why.

✪ IMPERIAL ASSAULT COURSE ALPHA

(ASSAULTCOURSE.ZIP) From the author of *Adullum* comes *Imperial Assault Course*, another slightly iffy map, but one that provides some monster fun. It'll keep you occupied for about 15 minutes flat out, but don't expect much in the way of depth or long-term play.
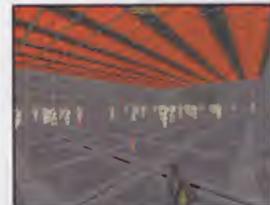
Nice plot – beware of glitches.

✪ ASTEROID BASE

(ASTEROID_98.ZIP) The story goes that Asteroid Base is the most heavily armed outpost of the evil Empire. This means you get attacked every second along the way, and have endless rounds of ammunition to keep you going. It's challenging, but watch out for some strange errors and glitches.

Pick of the bunch. So play it.

SIEGE AT VOL KANST

(DAK_SIEGE.ZIP) Without a doubt, this is the pick of the *Jedi Knight* bunch, with a top story to accompany some carefully crafted layout and buildings. Unlike some of the other *Jedi* maps, it provides a meaty challenge by being crafty, rather than just overwhelming you with loads of bad guys. To be recommended.

Jedi Search feels just right with its sense of scale.

JEDI SEARCH

(JEDISEARCH.ZIP) The idea here is to rescue some fellow Jedi dudes from an Imperial prison, battle the Dark Jedi who's holding them captive, and then start the self-destruct sequence onboard a Star Destroyer. The plot is spread over two separate maps, and both provide a superb sense of scale and an ambience that George Lucas would be proud of.

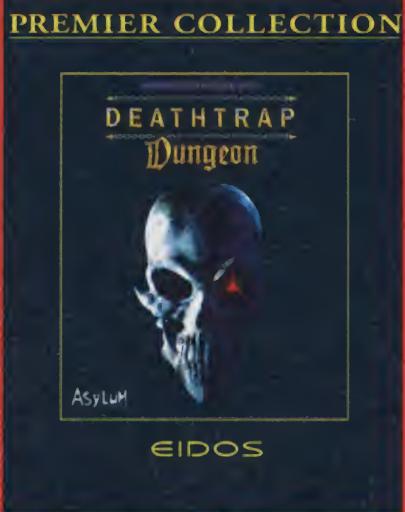*Warzone 1 & 2* has a great plot, great textures. One of the best.

WARZONE: CHAPTERS 1 & 2

(JEDISEARCH.ZIP) This two-map excursion is replete with new textures, sounds, and even cinematic introductions. The second level of the two is packed with some seriously good puzzles and challenges, and is simply stunning. To be recommended.
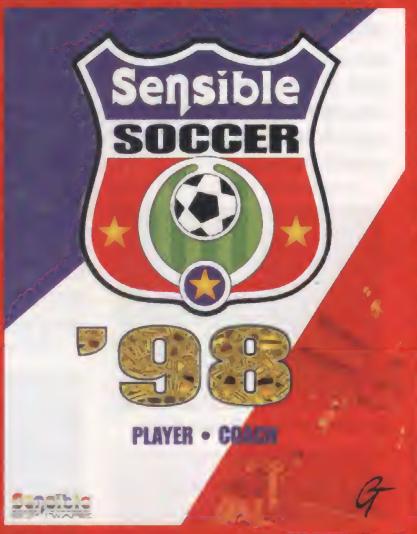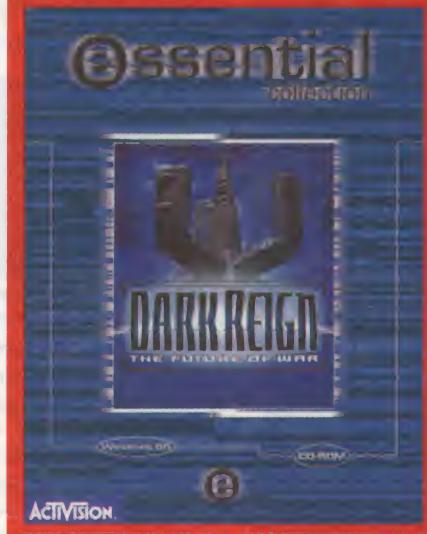

STARSIEGE: TRIBES
✪ Make Tribes come alive with patches and Bots

Starsiege: Tribes is a fantastic multiplayer game, but one with a few major flaws. For starters, many of the maps are too large – you can walk for what seems like hours before bumping into anyone, and even then the chances are that it'll be someone on your team. Whereas *Quake* treats people with some serious, tight action, *Tribes* loses them in an arena roughly the same size as the Ukraine. To help those of you with two-player set-ups, there's a Bots patch to bring your base alive.

They're a bit stupid, but armed and they shoot straight. Which is all you want, really.

BOTS UPDATE

(BOTS.EXE) Double-click on the Bots executable to extract the archive and AI files to your current *Tribes* directory, then create a new shortcut to 'Tribes.exe -mod bots'. Fire up the game, select 'Bots' from the game types' drop-down, and away you go. As mentioned, the Bots aren't bright chaps (they won't actively hunt enemies or pursue set objectives), but they keep moving and help protect your base while you're not there. Excellent fun, and an

absolute must for any *Tribes* LAN with fewer than eight players.

PATCHES

Make sure you have the latest version of *Tribes*. Check the version number displayed when you first start the game, then use the relevant update patch to move you on to the latest release. Files are: tribes10to13.exe and tribes12to13.exe which take 1.0 and 1.2 owners to new version 1.3; tribes11to12.exe which takes 1.1 owners to 1.2; and tribes11.exe which updates early 1.0 versions to 1.1.

Easy, Triber (groan).
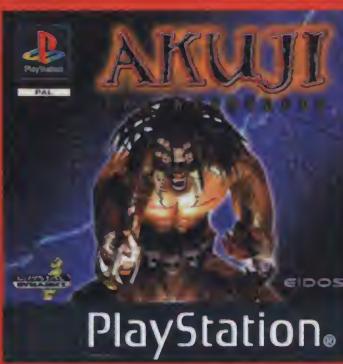
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO....

JEZ SAN

Sunny Edgware at the very tip of the Northern Line, and a chat with one of the longest-serving and most recognisable names in the games industry. *Paul Presley* meets the head of Argonaut

The Lotus Elan in the driveway says it all. I last visited Jez San and the Argonaut team at the end of 1995 to preview *FX Fighter* – the PC's first 3D beat 'em up – and remember being shown around a nondescript square building with a couple of hatchbacks parked in the road outside. Today, outside their elegant and heavily designed Edgware office, there are still a couple of basic family runabouts and Ford Borings, but among them is the Lotus. Sleek and silver, with a licence plate reading JEZ 1. The word of the day here is growth. Despite that, we haven't seen much of Argonaut's work on the PC other than a conversion of the console hit *Croc*.

You've been pretty quiet on the PC for a while. Any particular reason?
We did *Croc* on the PC, that was about a year ago. Uhh... there was *Alien Resurrection*, that was also about a year ago. But we have a lot of experiments, a lot of technologies that we're working on.

That's what I remembered most about you the last time we met, that you were concentrating a lot on the technology side of things. Is that still your main area of concern?
Well, the trouble with the PC market is that it's mainly become a first-person shooter market – lots of *Quake* clones and so on. We don't like doing *Quake* clones, or any clones come to that; we wanted to wait until we had something very special for the PC market.

What sort of thing?
We've got 3D platform games, unusual twists on 3D

racing games, 3D platform shooters... in fact they're all twists on the 3D platform genre. For the PC market, we want to do things that are different.

So saying, Jez invites me to take a look at a physics engine demo running on his monitor. The appearance is of a basic driving arena with a comical ambulance driving around various platforms and objects. But the look isn't important – it's the physics that impresses. Ramps pivot and tilt, chains swing, and the vehicle bumps and slides. Gravity and inertia are readily apparent and are remarkably realistic. In some ways it makes you realise how basic the physics engines in existing games are. *Carmageddon* suddenly looks as exaggerated as you always suspected it was.

Do you think you tend to get more out of designing the engines as opposed to the games?
I think they work hand in hand. We do have a few people here who only do R&D, who specialise in creating new technologies, but we have many more people working on the creative side, the art, the concepts, the design. People like to think that Argonaut are just a technology company, but out of the 130 people working here, only about 20 are programmers. We're very much a games company that happens to have very good technology as opposed to a technology company that also happens to make games. And that's not including the chip business that's now been spun off into its own building.

Is that a spin-off of the old BRender technology?
No, the BRender people have been moved on to various games. Some of them still do R&D, but most

of them are working on games. It was a spin-off of the Super FX team. After we designed the Super FX chip we did some other RISC processors for Apple and Philips. After that we thought that it was horrible designing things for other people – it was far better to design for ourselves and then licence out the technology when we were finished. ARC [Argonaut's RISC Core microprocessor] has the world's first customisable microprocessor so that our licensees get all the source code and the tools they need to make their own microprocessor however they want.

Are there many people using them?
A number of big companies like Texas Instruments and Fujitsu are using them, and hopefully many more will soon. We think that it's the next generation of microprocessor.

CHIPS WITH EVERYTHING
About three years ago Argonaut split into two separate companies. One side continued developing games and researching new technologies, the other concentrated on taking the successful ARC chip and establishing it as one of the world's leading microprocessors. This sort of development is nothing new to Argonaut. Back in 1996, just before the 3D accelerator revolution took hold, Jez's team developed the BRender graphics technology – a multiplatform API that could produce some of the most stunning graphics seen at the time. Unfortunately, there was a large fly in the ointment.

How did the 3D accelerator revolution affect your BRender technology?
The thing that screwed up BRender was Microsoft
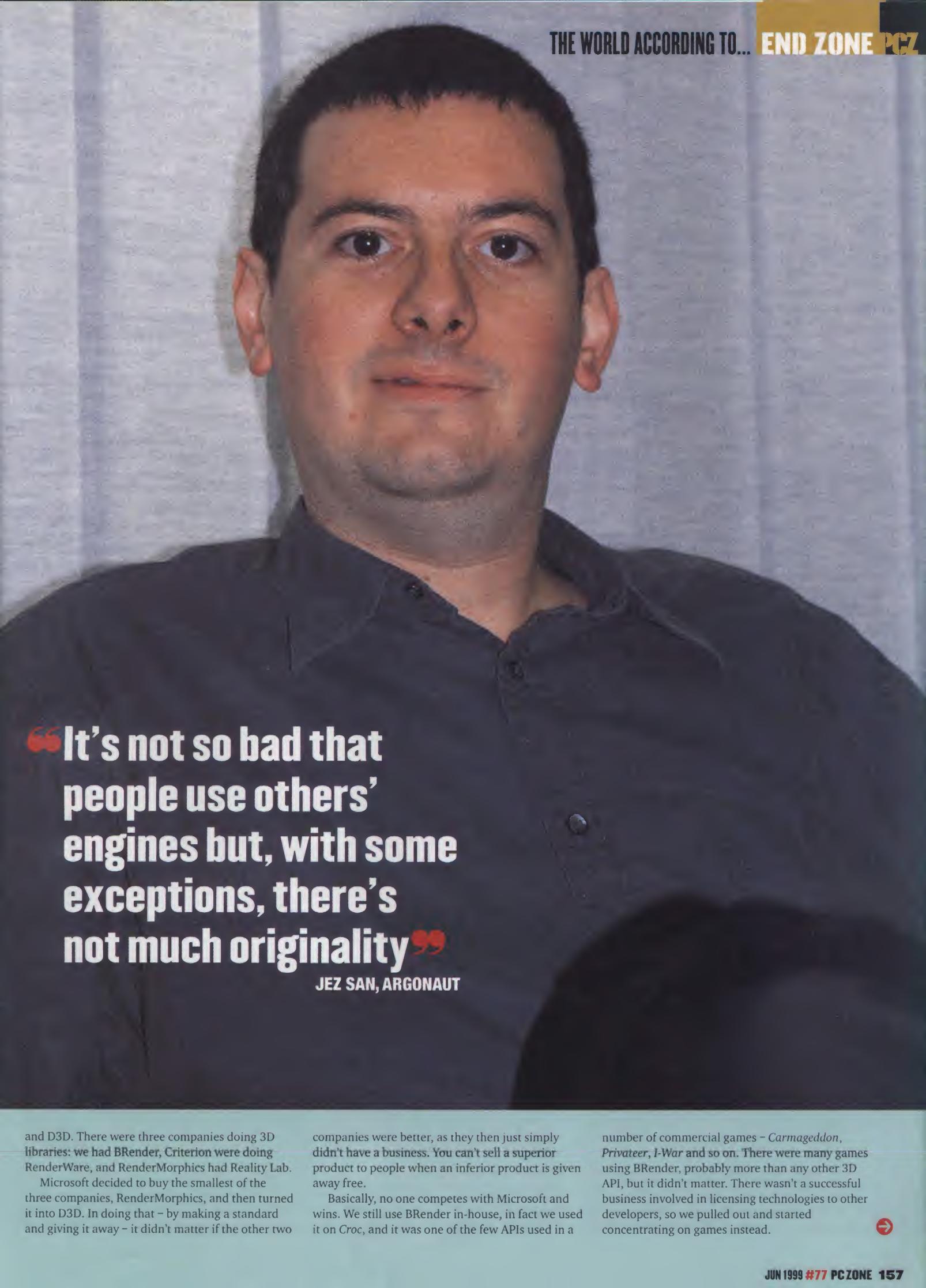
"It's not so bad that people use others' engines but, with some exceptions, there's not much originality"

JEZ SAN, ARGONAUT

and D3D. There were three companies doing 3D libraries: we had BRender, Criterion were doing RenderWare, and RenderMorphics had Reality Lab.

Microsoft decided to buy the smallest of the three companies, RenderMorphics, and then turned it into D3D. In doing that – by making a standard and giving it away – it didn't matter if the other two

companies were better, as they then just simply didn't have a business. You can't sell a superior product to people when an inferior product is given away free.

Basically, no one competes with Microsoft and wins. We still use BRender in-house, in fact we used it on *Croc*, and it was one of the few APIs used in a

number of commercial games – *Carmageddon*, *Privateer*, *I-War* and so on. There were many games using BRender, probably more than any other 3D API, but it didn't matter. There wasn't a successful business involved in licensing technologies to other developers, so we pulled out and started concentrating on games instead.

The verdant nature of the office hides the building sites around.

Jez and the team that made him famous.

Merchandising gone mad.

Not a *Quake* clone in sight. Bliss.

Now you see it, then you don't: *Kanaan* is the game that's not meant to be.

Kanaan's been canned.

Kanaan: and so another promising title bites the dust.

Birds Of Prey: the only flight sim with 40 planes to fly.

Starglider: an all-time, eight-bit classic.

Starfox: forever changed the face of N64 gaming.

Alien Resurrection: a recent hit.

Croc: not a *Mario* clone at all.

Any bitterness towards Microsoft?
No, not now, but at the time, yes. But they were only doing what they've always done – if they see a gap in the market and someone making a decent living out of it, they want to take it over for themselves. If I was Microsoft, I'd be doing that too.

KANAAN FIRE
With the recent news that Ubi Soft had put a hold on Argonaut's forthcoming action-fest *Kanaan* (mainly because, says Jez, the graphics technology was advancing too far ahead of the gameplay and there was no hope for a Christmas release this year), it looks as though we'll have to wait even longer for Argonaut to make a truly triumphant return to the PC games market. How does he see it evolving without them?

You said earlier that the PC market was mainly just first-person shooters. Is that where we're heading in the long term?
No, I don't think so. It's just a temporary blip in the market. The huge success of *Quake* derivatives won't continue forever, the market can only cope with so many clones. After a while, people will want something original again; it might not be this year or the next, but we're happy to wait.

How do you see the FPS evolving in the meantime?
Well, *Quake III Arena* looks very nice, but it's more of the same. More polygons, more explosions, more effects – a bit of fog this time. They've been selling the same game for the past five years and there's only so many times you can do that. Carmack's brilliant, and the innovations he puts into what is basically the same game are amazing, but I do think people will tire of that after a while, and we're not about to stoop to the level of doing just another *Quake* clone. We like to think that all our games are original, even if others don't agree with us.

Hasn't the *Quake* clone become a genre within itself though?
Absolutely, but are people really so short-sighted that they think they're getting originality from each FPS they buy? In some cases, they're literally the same game with different graphics and an ever-so slightly different storyline. You might as well just have a user-configurable game, where you click on which graphics set you want and which intro movie you want to see. It's seems a shame that the games themselves are so similar.

But similarity is inevitable when you start using licensed engines.
I don't think it's *so* bad that people use others' engines, but barring a few exceptions such as *Half-Life* – which was fantastic – there's not a lot of originality. I'm going to be biased here, but I think in the 3D platform genre there's more originality. The market might not perceive that, they might think that *Croc* is a rip-off of *Mario*, but apart from superficially, there is no similarity. The actual games are 100 per cent different. It's the same with *Gex* or *Abe's Oddysee*.

How about the online market? Has working mainly on consoles prevented you from exploring it?
It's always interested me. When I was 16, I played the first MUD at Essex University. I was the first wizard on MUD 17 years ago. That's how I cut my teeth basically, and I've been waiting for it to take

off ever since. It's still hard to make money on it even now. There are various companies like EA with *Ultima Online* and Multitude with *FireTeam*, but no one's making any real money out of online gaming yet. They offer it as a freebie or as a competitive feature in their retail game. Things will change, once the technology gets better, and once the latency improves.

How about the actual games? Will they need to change?
Designing a multiplayer game – a massively multiplayer game – is very different to designing a LAN multiplayer game. We designed one a few years ago, but unfortunately we were working for a publisher who changed the rules on us and made it difficult for us to complete the game.

> ## "I wouldn't recommend starting up by yourself. Make your first game or two without risking your own pocket"
> **JEZ SAN, ARGONAUT**

Can you say anything about it?
No, not much. It's under legal constraints right now, and People are suing each other as we speak. It was a major comic book licence that people would fondly remember from about ten years ago and it was a very well-implemented multiplayer game on the Internet that solved a lot of the inherent technical problems. In addition it was fun. It was a multiplayer arcade game, not a persistent adventure game; it was a 'dip in, dip out, play with your friends, quit, play with your other friends' kind of thing.

It was exactly what the world needs because when you've got a worldwide network of people playing with each other, you can't really have set times for set games. The people you'd want to meet would be in different time zones and be working at different hours. You need games that you can dip in and out of and still fully enjoy. You can't have games that force you to work to their schedule. We had a game like that but now the project is closed down because of legal wrangling. Maybe one day we'll go back to it.

Jez: no one's making any money out of online gaming yet.

But you've learnt from the experience?
Absolutely. We're doing a game for the Sega Dreamcast, using its built-in modem, called *Red Dog*, which is an opportunity for us to put our experience of designing a massively multiplayer game back into something that's coming out soon. As for the PC market, it'll be interesting to see what happens in the near future for online gaming, but right now the Internet just isn't that good – it's limiting the kinds of games you can do well on it. When we can do action games with no limitations and no glitches, then it will be great.

Argonaut have been around practically since the beginning. Do you think the games industry has become more commercialised, more dependent on making money and spinning out licences?
Come on, don't you remember Ocean and US Gold ten years ago? Almost every single game back then was a licence of some sort. It's not the case today. I think the trend these days is for far less licences than there used to be.

Okay, maybe not so many licences, but there's certainly a greater emphasis on developing franchises, spinning off sequels and making a lot more money than there ever was.
Probably because the industry got the attention of some of the larger companies, public companies that are doing quite well. We make more money than Hollywood. But even when all the movie companies started entering the business around four years ago, there was a lot of stupid money around that didn't go anywhere and companies that quickly went bust. The industry today is very healthy, but it's still survival of the fittest.

Doesn't that make it a lot harder for young wannabe games designers to break into the industry?
I think if you're tenacious enough and have the guts you can still do it. Look at Demis Hassabis for instance [see last month's *PC ZONE*]. I would definitely recommend starting with someone else first instead of setting up by yourself. Make your first game or two with another company so you don't risk your own pocket, then when you think you know it all, you can start out on your own and make your own mistakes. I mean, how many new companies are there in Guildford that have just started up in the last year? There's like 20 new developers there.

Most of them coming out of Bullfrog.
I'm so glad that Argonaut have a lot of loyalty – we've got people who've been here for ten years or more. In Guildford, it seems like a haven for people breaking off and starting something else.

Have you ever thought about moving there yourself?
What, Guildford? No, I'm quite happy here. I'm a North London guy, born and bred.

At which point, we're interrupted by the arrival of various suits from one of the major console manufacturers, illustrating nicely just how serious the business has become. It's a shame that Argonaut aren't doing more for the PC market, but you have to admire their patience in waiting for the *Quake* clone wars to end. And, as I'm leaving their office, the Lotus, still shining brightly in the afternoon sun, seems to indicate that there's no real need for them to do otherwise. PCZ

DEATHMATCH

So what's it gonna be – an action-packed science fiction blockbuster that everyone's soon going to be talking about, or a two-dimensional, very naughty bully boy who, as children, we all idolised and secretly wanted to be like?

⭐ **MENACE TO SOCIETY** Charlie Brooker

THE PHANTOM MENACE VS DENNIS THE MENACE

WHAT IS IT? The most eagerly-anticipated film in history; a multimillion-dollar science fiction blockbuster laced with spectacularly sophisticated and expensive special effects.	Two-dimensional pen-and-ink comic strip series for the *Beano*, a comic printed on bog-quality paper and sold to children for pennies.
WHAT HAPPENS IN IT? It recounts the tale of a sinister young boy who eventually grows up to become one of the most evil beings in the entire universe.	It recounts the tale of a sinister young boy who eventually grows up to become a mini-cab driver or a petty criminal.
WHO'S THE VILLAIN OF THE PIECE? A grown man dancing about in silly make-up, pulling faces and pretending to be called Darth Maul. What is this, pantomime?	Vaguely limp-wristed figure of fun called Walter the Softy, who closely resembles ex-Home Secretary Michael Howard.
WHAT ARE THE FANS LIKE? Indisputable mass appeal means the majority of the general public may be considered 'fans'. But there also exists a depressing core of psychotically obsessed *Star Wars* disciples who can quote every line of every film verbatim, and habitually dress as Boba Fett at weekends. In a sane world, the police would be called to come round and neuter them. With shears.	Kids, backward teenagers, smug politicians, faintly scary businessmen, nauseating 'Great British Eccentrics', stoned students, unimaginative celebrities filling in light-hearted My Media questionnaires for the *Guardian* newspaper, and grown men who live with their parents. Much the same as the hard-core *Star Wars* fans.
WHAT ABOUT THE COMPETITION? Forget it. Opening another movie over the same weekend would be like trying to sell skateboards at a paraplegic convention.	Ousted Biffo The Bear from the *Beano*'s front cover way back in 1974. Now competes with wholesome, blonde-haired, blue-eyed American version.
ANY CONTROVERSIAL MOMENTS? Not that we know of at press time; but in the very first *Star Wars* movie Luke Skywalker clearly has a 'thing' for Princess Leia, who is revealed to be his sister in *Return Of The Jedi*. That's a bit odd in anyone's book.	Turns the ugly, vindictive brutality of the childhood bully into a whimsical exercise in chucklesome slapstick. Punchline panel used to regularly consist of hilarious scene in which Dennis' father beat him savagely with a slipper.

WINNER

Dennis The Menace. Why? Because why rely on something as wussy as 'The Force' when a common or garden catapult will do? Huh? So nyerrr.

ILLUSTRATION Charlie Brooker

SICK NOTES

In which *ZONE*'s foul-mouthed foghorn responds to a bunch of losers (who probably deserve a slap anyway) with his own trademarked brand of TLC

● **MR SHOUTY** Charlie Brooker

SICK NOTES WANTS YOUR LETTERS

Sick Notes wants your letters! And we still want to know what you reckon are the biggest shithole towns in the country (see Worst Town In Britain). By the way, Worst Band In The World has now been canned due to lack of imagination.

WRITE TO Sick Notes, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk
With the subject heading **'Sick Notes'**

WHAT'S MY LINE?

I have noticed that lots of the *ZONE* 'workers' look like they deserve to be somewhere else. For example, Adam Phillips looks like he should be in prison for murder, and Phil 'Magic' Wand seems perfect for some early evening game show. Is Steve Hill looking at the camera too closely, or does he really have a huge nose? Richie Shoemaker should be stuck in an American sitcom about a hairdresser. And did you just 'pull in' Keith Pullin off a merchant ship?

Paul Greveson

● **You should thank your lucky stars we cropped Paul Mallinson's portrait. In the full-length version he's doing something** offensive with a bowl of chicken livers and a half-peeled yam.

WORST TOWN IN BRITAIN

Your nominations for the worst town in Britain are continuing to flood in and, by jiminy, we're grateful. In fact we're planning a cut-out-and-keep map for a forthcoming edition. But, in a surprise development, Blackpool is pulling steadily into the lead, leaving previous favourites Banbury and Swindon floundering. Here's why (and don't forget to keep those entries a-coming)…

I have to agree strongly with Mr Steven Robinson's opinion that Blackpool is the worst town in Britain. Any place with larger-than-life-sized illuminated plastic heads of the Coronation Street cast, and a chip shop with a maitre d', wholly deserves a ten-megaton nuclear airburst.

Kristian Geil

As a native, I feel I have the right to nominate Blackpool as the biggest shithole in Britain. For Christ's sake, the place was named after a 'black pool' – probably an olde English phrase meaning 'cess pit'. Holidaymakers must have fly DNA in their genetic make-up to be attracted to this place.

Skartag

BLAM!

Welcome to BLACKPOOL
Notorious PIT OF DESPAIR

● ILLUSTRATION Charlie Brooker

Blackpool is the worst town in Britain by miles. In fact it's probably the worst town in the whole world. Why anyone would want to come here on holiday is a complete mystery. I'd rather swim through a river of shit – with my mouth open.

'Angry'

LITIGATION CORNER

Typical. Just as we pull the plug on our Worst Band In The World nominations (because everyone was voting for Steps), you start sending in better entries. Trouble is, most of your letters are strewn with swear words, threats, and libellous statements, and are therefore unprintable in their original state. What follows, then, is a selection of edited highlights. See if you can spot the bits we've changed…

The worst band in the world are the [blooming] Manic Street [copulating] Preachers. A more [introspective], [homely], old, [large], dull, bunch of ex-university [folk] would be impossible to find. Look at the front cover of their last 'magnum opus' – they look like a gang of [simple-minded manual workers] in beige overalls doing an [incompetent] copy of the cover of *The Joshua Tree*. If they don't get their act together and [cruel reference to the disappearance of Richey Manic] I'm gonna [deeply unpleasant physical threat].

Ben Cousins

Worst band in the world? Roxette. They produce the most insipid, tooting brand of 'Euro-pop' to have [emerged] from the [backside] of a [dislikeable] record producer. If your idea of musical pleasure is paying through the nose for some soulless corporate twat to pour boiling monkey [excrement] into your ears while yapping dogs chew on your [reproductive organs], then Roxette are for you. Everyone knows the reason they are 'dressed for success' – it's because [outrageous and demonstrably untrue suggestion involving Satan, cults of impressionable youngsters, animal abuse and the consumption of babies].

Kristian Geil

There's no one worse than Bryan Adams. 'Everything I Do, I Do It For You' is a hanging offence. And '18 'Till I Die'? [Unlikely.]

Tim Roser

THIS NEWS JUST IN...

The *EastEnder* I would least like to sleep with is Bianca, as she has ginger hair.

K Greene

● **Incredibly, no one's voted for Frank yet.** PCZ

LOSER OF THE MONTH

You can be a loser and also a winner – of £50!

BUNDLE! BUNDLE!

Charlie Brooker, you are sad. You sit in your ivory tower, receiving letters and answering them, but why? You don't have the guts necessary to meet anybody face to face, eye to eye. Would you ever have the guts to do that? No, because you're a wimp, and what's more, you have no friends. If you did have you might get some sun and actually talk to people, but you can't. You get your kicks from insulting others, knowing that if they feel like insulting you back you can simply click on DELETE or throw their postcard in the bin.

You, Charlie, are sad. Very, very sad. And don't insult me like you normally do, saying that I'm a lonely person that lives at their computer, cos I'm not. I have a life, I have friends, and I can spell, unlike the other idiots who write to you. If you have the guts, I would like a personal reply to this letter. But you don't, do you? Just publish a reply in your mag and feel safe, you sad git.

Chris Hayes-Kossmann

● **Look, if you want a fight you can have one. We'll trade blows on this page. I'll start off with a description of my first move, and then you email yours back, and then I'll counter it the following month. Okay?**

Right, well let's assume we've moved to the car park behind a pub, and we've been standing around taunting each other for a few moments. Okay, here's my first move: I'm pushing you backwards with my left hand, and cuffing you round the ear with my right. Your shirt has been slightly torn, your hair's getting all messed up, and I'm hurling filthy language at you. Got that?

Your turn. Make your move, jot it down, and mail it right in. And the rest of you can email taunts and chants, like a pack of drunken bystanders, if you like. We'll print the best ones on this page. Oooh! Exciting!